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P R O S P E C T

FROM THE  
CONGRESS-GALLERY,

DURING THE  
SESSION,

BEGUN DECEMBER 7, 1795.

CONTAINING,

The President's Speech, the addresses of both Houses, some of the debates in the Senate, and all the principal debates in the House of Representatives; each debate being printed under one head, and so digested and amplified as to give the reader the complete view of the proceedings with the least possible fatigue.

WITH

OCCASIONAL REMARKS,

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By PETER PORCUPINE.

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PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY THOMAS BRADFORD, SENATOR

1005-BALCON & SYNDICATE.

No. 2.

Third Street, near

1796.





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## P R E F A C E.

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*THE* serenity, that reigned in our political hemisphere at the close of the last session of Congress, was soon succeeded by the boisterous conflict for and against the treaty with Great Britain. This struggle, the cause as well as the circumstances of which are too unpleasant to be dwelt on here, ended in the determination of the discomfited party to petition the House of Representatives, and thus renew the fight. Hence most people looked towards the meeting of Congress with unusual anxiety: every real American had his hopes and his fears; of course, I had mine: and, as I look upon it to be the duty of every man to keep the deck during a storm, I resolved to be a punctual attendant in the Gallery from one end of the session to the other.

Most of the members will, without doubt, recollect seeing a little dark man, clad in a grey coat something the worse for wear, sitting in the west corner of the front seat: that has been my post; and I can boldly say, that I never deserted it, except during the five days that I was employed in writing the New Year's Gift.

During this my contemplative attendance, I made a number of remarks, which, because they appeared pertinent to me, I naturally imagined would be useful to my countrymen; and this, together with considerations of a domestic nature, tempted me to



present them to the public, accompanied with the debates to which they refer.

But, I should be wanting in justice to myself on this occasion, were I to omit mentioning other motives that had a share in inducing me to undertake the compilation. I had observed, with a good deal of pain, that a certain Mr. Callender, amused himself, during one half of the summer, in re-publishing the debates from the *Philadelphia Gazette*, with the voluminous addition of the minutes of the House. This laborious task appeared to me to answer no earthly purpose, but that of keeping half a dozen lusty fellows pent up in the city, at work in ink and filth, to the evident detriment of their health, while they might be so much more wholesomely as well as profitably employed in getting in the harvest. It was also certain, that, while Mr. Callender himself was this way engaged, he could not apply the whole force of his genius to his other important studies; and that, should he be suffered to proceed the ensuing summer, the people of the United States might, perhaps, be deprived of a third "*Political Progress of Britain*," foretelling the long-hoped-for ruin of that "*insular Bastile*."

Thus then, in spite of my cruel and implacable persecutors, the Democrats, from whose malice no degree of inoffensiveness has been able to shelter me, I hope the world will be convinced, that this undertaking of mine has been dictated by the purest patriotism and urbanity; a circumstance that assuredly does not render it less worthy of the patronage of my fellow citizens.

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## PROSPECT, &c.

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### MEETING OF CONGRESS.—A SPEAKER CHOSEN.—PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

MONDAY, 7th December, 1795.

**T**HE House being met, proceeded to the choice of a Speaker and a Clerk, when Mr. Jonathan Dayton, one of the Representatives for the state of New-Jersey was chosen Speaker, and Mr. John Beckley, Clerk.

TUESDAY, 8th December, 1795.

The Senators and Representatives being assembled in the chamber of the latter, the President of the United States entered, took the chair, and opened the session with the following speech :

*Fellow Citizens of the Senate,  
and House of Representatives,*

I TRUST I do not deceive myself, while I indulge the persuasion; that I have never met you at any period, when, more than at the present, the situation of our public affairs has afforded just cause for mutual congratulation, and for inviting you to join with me in profound gratitude to the



Author of all Good, for the numerous and extraordinary blessings we enjoy.

The termination of the long, expensive and distressing war, in which we have been engaged with certain Indians, North West of the Ohio, is placed in the option of the United States, by a Treaty which the Commander of our army has concluded, provisionally, with the hostile tribes in that region. In the adjustment of the terms, the satisfaction of the Indians was deemed an object worthy no less of the policy, than of the liberality of the United States, as the necessary basis of durable tranquility. This object, it is believed, has been fully attained. The articles agreed upon, will immediately be laid before the Senate, for their consideration.

The Creek and Cherokee Indians, who alone of the Southern tribes had annoyed our Frontiers, have lately confirmed their pre-existing Treaties with us; and were giving evidence of a sincere disposition to carry them into effect, by the surrender of the prisoners and property they had taken:—But we have to lament, that the fair prospect in this quarter, has been once more clouded by wanton murders, which some citizens of Georgia are represented to have recently perpetrated on hunting parties of the Creeks; which have again subjected that frontier to inquietude and danger; which will be productive of further expence, and may occasion more effusion of blood. Measures are pursuing to prevent or mitigate the usual consequences of such outrages; and with the hope of their succeeding—at least to avert general hostility.

A letter from the Emperor of Morocco, announces to me his recognition of our treaty made with his father, the late Emperor, and consequently the continuance of peace with that power. With peculiar satisfaction I add, that information has been received from an agent deputed on our part to Algiers, importing, that the terms of a treaty with the Dey and Regency of that country, had been adjusted in such a manner, as to authorize the expectation of a speedy peace, and the restoration of our unfortunate fellow citizens from a grievous captivity.

The latest advices from our envoy at the court of Madrid, give, moreover, the pleasing information, that he had received assurances of a speedy and satisfactory conclusion of his negotiation. While the event, depending upon unadjusted particulars, cannot be regarded as as-

certained, it is agreeable to cherish the expectation of an issue, which, securing amicably very essential interests of the United States, will, at the same time, lay the foundation of lasting harmony with a power, whose friendship we have uniformly and sincerely desired to cultivate.

Though not before officially disclosed to the House of Representatives, you, gentlemen, are all apprized, that a treaty of amity, commerce and navigation, has been negotiated with Great Britain; and that the Senate have advised and consented to its ratification, upon a condition, which excepts part of one article.—Agreeably thereto, and to the best judgment I was able to form of the public interest, after full and mature deliberation, I have added my sanction. The result on the part of his Britannic Majesty is unknown. When received, the subject will, without delay, be placed before Congress.

This interesting summary of our affairs, with regard to the foreign powers, between whom and the United States, controversies have subsisted; and with regard also to those of our Indian neighbours, with whom, we have been in a state of enmity or misunderstanding, opens a wide field for consoling and gratifying reflections.—If by prudence and moderation on every side, the extinguishment of all the causes of external discord, which have heretofore menaced our tranquility, on terms compatible with our national rights and honour, shall be the happy result; how firm and how precious a foundation will have been laid for accelerating, maturing and establishing the prosperity of our country!

Contemplating the internal situation, as well as the external relations of the United States, we discover equal cause for contentment and satisfaction. While many of the nations of Europe, with their American dependencies, have been involved in a contest unusually bloody, exhausting and calamitous, in which the evils of foreign war have been aggravated by domestic convulsion and insurrection; in which many of the arts most useful to society, have been exposed to discouragement and decay; in which scarcity of subsistence has embittered other sufferings—while even the anticipation of a return of the blessings of peace and repose, are alloyed by the sense of heavy and accumulating burthens, which press upon all the departments of industry, and threaten to clog the future springs of government—our favoured country, happy in a striking



contrast, has enjoyed general tranquility; a tranquility the more satisfactory, because maintained at the expence of no duty.—Faithful to ourselves, we have violated no obligation to others.—Our agriculture, commerce and manufactures prosper beyond former example; the molestations of our trade (to prevent a continuance of which, however, very pointed remonstrances have been made) being overbalanced by the aggregate benefits which it derives from a neutral position. Our population advances with a celerity, which, exceeding the most sanguine calculations, proportionally augments our strength and resources, and guarantees our future security. Every part of the Union displays indications of rapid and various improvement, and with burthens so light as scarcely to be perceived; with resources fully adequate to our present exigencies; with governments founded on the genuine principles of rational liberty; and with mild and wholesome laws; is it too much to say, that our country exhibits a spectacle of national happiness never surpassed, if ever before equalled?

Placed in a situation every way auspicious, motives of commanding force impel us, with sincere acknowledgement to Heaven, and pure love to our country, to unite our efforts to preserve, prolong and improve our immense advantages.—To co-operate with you in this desirable work, is a fervent and favourite wish of my heart.

It is a valuable ingredient in the general estimate of our welfare, that the part of our country which was lately the scene of disorder and insurrection, now enjoys the blessings of quiet and order. The misled have abandoned their errors, and pay the respect to our constitution and laws, which is due from good citizens to the public authorities of the society. These circumstances have induced me to pardon, generally, the offenders here referred to; and to extend forgiveness to those who had been adjudged to capital punishment.—For though I shall always think it a sacred duty to exercise with firmness and energy, the constitutional powers with which I am vested; yet it appears to me no less consistent with the public good, than it is with my personal feelings, to mingle in the operations of government, every degree of moderation and tenderness, which the national justice, dignity and safety may permit.

*Gentlemen,*

Among the objects which will claim your attention in the course of the session, a review of our military establish-

ment is not the least important. It is called for by the events which have changed, and may be expected still further to change the relative situation of our frontiers. In this review, you will doubtless allow due weight to the considerations, that the questions between us and certain foreign powers are not yet finally adjusted; that the war in Europe is not yet terminated; and that our western posts, when recovered, will demand provision for garrisoning and securing them. A statement of our present military force will be laid before you by the department of war.

With the review of our army establishment, is naturally connected that of the militia. It will merit enquiry, what imperfections in the existing plan, further experience may have unfolded. The subject is of so much moment, in my estimation, as to excite a constant solicitude, that the consideration of it may be renewed, till the greatest attainable perfection shall be accomplished. Time is wearing away some advantages for forwarding the object, while none better deserves the persevering attention of the public councils.

While we indulge the satisfaction, which the actual condition of our western borders so well authorizes, it is necessary that we should not lose sight of an important truth, which continually receives new confirmations,—namely, that the provisions heretofore made with a view to the protection of the Indians from the violences of the lawless part of our frontier inhabitants, are insufficient. It is demonstrated that these violences can now be perpetrated with impunity. And it can need no argument to prove, that unless the murdering of Indians can be restrained, by bringing the murderers to condign punishment, all the exertions of the government to prevent destructive retaliations by the Indians, will prove fruitless, and all our present agreeable prospects illusory. The frequent destruction of innocent women and children, who are chiefly the victims of retaliation, must continue to shock humanity; and an enormous expence, to drain the treasury of the Union.

To enforce upon the Indians the observance of justice, it is indispensable that there shall be competent means of rendering justice to them. If these means can be devised by the wisdom of Congress; and especially if there can be added an adequate provision for supplying the necessities of the Indians, on reasonable terms, (a measure, the men-



tion of which I the more readily repeat, as in all the conferences with them, they urge it with solicitude) I should not hesitate to entertain a strong hope of rendering our tranquility permanent. I add, with pleasure, that the probability even of their civilization, is not diminished by the experiments which have been thus far made, under the auspices of government.—The accomplishment of this work, if practicable, will reflect undecaying lustre on our national character, and administer the most grateful consolations that virtuous minds can know.

*Gentlemen of the House of Representatives,*

The state of our revenue with the sums which have been borrowed and re-imburshed, pursuant to different acts of Congress, will be submitted from the proper departments; together with an estimate of the appropriations necessary to be made for the service of the ensuing year.

Whether measures may not be adviseable to reinforce the provision for the redemption of the public debt, will naturally engage your examination.—Congress have demonstrated their sense to be, and it were superfluous to repeat mine, that whatsoever will tend to accelerate the honourable extinction of our public debt, accords as much with the true interest of our country, as with the general sense of our constituents.

*Gentlemen of the Senate, and  
House of Representatives,*

The statements which will be laid before you relative to the mint, will shew the situation of that institution; and the necessity of some further legislative provisions, for carrying the business of it more completely into effect; and for checking abuses which appear to be arising in particular quarters.

The progress in providing materials for the frigates, and in building them; the state of the fortifications of our harbours; the measures which have been pursued for obtaining proper scites for arsenals, and for replenishing our magazines with military stores; and the steps which have been taken towards the execution of the law for opening a trade with the Indians; will likewise be presented for the information of Congress.

Temperate discussion of the important subjects which may arise in the course of the session; and mutual forbearance where there is a difference of opinion, are too obvi-

ous and necessary for the peace, happiness and welfare of our Country, to need any recommendation of mine.

UNITED STATES,

8th December, 1795.

### REMARKS.

WHEN the President arrived at the House this day, he found it in that state of composed gravity, of respectful silence, for which the Congress is so remarkable, and which, whatever wittings may say, is the surest mark of sound understanding.—The gallery was crowded with anxious spectators, whose orderly behaviour was not the least pleasing part of the scene.

The President is a timid speaker: he is a proof, among thousands, that superior genius, wisdom, and courage, are ever accompanied with excessive modesty.

His situation was at this time almost entirely new. Never, till a few months preceding this session, had the tongue of the most factious slander dared to make a public attack on his character. This was the first time he had ever entered the walls of Congress without a full assurance of meeting a welcome from every heart. He now saw, even among those to whom he addressed himself, numbers who, to repay all his labours, all his anxious cares for their welfare, were ready to thwart his measures, and present him the cup of humiliation, filled to the brim. When he came to that part of his speech, where he mentions the treaty with His Britannic Majesty, he cast his eyes towards the gallery.—It was not the look of indignation and reproach, but of injured virtue, which is ever ready to forgive. I was pleased to observe, that not a single murmur of disapprobation was heard from the spectators that surrounded me; and, if there were some a-



mongst them, who had assisted at the turbulent town-meetings, I am persuaded, they were sincerely penitent. When he departed, every look seemed to say : God prolong his precious life.

DEBATE (IN THE SENATE)\* ON THE ADDRESS TO  
THE PRESIDENT IN ANSWER TO HIS  
SPEECH.

FRIDAY, Dec. 11.

THE address in answer to the President's speech was taken up by paragraphs.

The two last clauses but one, which are as follows, were moved to be struck out by Mr. Mason.

The interesting prospect of our affairs with regard to the foreign powers, between whom and the United States controversies have subsisted, is not more satisfactory than the review of our internal situation ; if from the former we derive an expectation of the extinguishment of all the causes of external discord that have heretofore endangered our tranquility, and on terms consistent with our national honour and safety, in the latter we discover those numerous and wide spread tokens of prosperity, which in so peculiar a manner distinguish our happy country.

Circumstances thus every way auspicious demand our gratitude and sincere acknowledgements to Almighty God, and require that we should unite our efforts in imitation of your enlightened example, to establish and preserve the peace, freedom, and prosperity of our country.

MR. MASON observed, that he had hoped, nothing contained in the address reported as an answer to the President's speech, would have been such as to force the Senate to precipitate decisions. The two clauses he objected to disappointed him in that hope. They were calculated to bring again into view the important subject which occupied the Senate during their June session. This he conceived would answer no good purpose ; the minority on that occasion were not now to be expected to recede, from the o-

\* When no mention is made of the House in which the debate has taken place, the reader will please to observe, that it is meant, in the House of Representatives.

pinion they then held, and they could not therefore join in the indirect self-approbation which the majority appeared to wish for, and which was most certainly involved in the two clauses which he hoped would be struck out. If his motion were agreed to, the remainder of the address would in his opinion stand unexceptionable. He did not see, for his part, that our situation is every way auspicious. Notwithstanding the treaty, our trade is grievously molested.

Mr. KING observed, that the principal features observable in the answer reported to the President's address, were, to keep up that harmony of intercourse which ought to subsist between the legislature and the President, and to express confidence in the undiminished firmness and love of country which always characterise our chief executive magistrate. He objected to striking out especially the first clause, because founded on undeniable truth. It only declares, that our prospects, as to our external relations, are not more satisfactory, than a review of our internal situation would prove. Was not this representation true, he asked; could it be controverted? This clause, he contended, contained nothing reasonably objectionable; it did not say as much as the second, to which only most of the objections of the member up before him applied, an answer to which he should defer, expecting that a question would be put on each in order.

The clause, he said, appeared to him drawn up in such terms as could not offend the nicest feelings of the minority on the important decision in June; it was particularly circumspect and cautious. If liable to objection it was in not going as far as the truth would warrant.

Some conversation took place as to the mode required by order of putting the question; whether it should not be put on each clause separately, or whether upon striking out both at once.

The chair requested that the motion should be reduced to writing. Mr. Mason accordingly reduced it to writing, and it went to striking out both clauses at once.

Mr. MASON agreed most cordially that the situation of our external relations were not more a cause of joy than our situation at home. But the obvious meaning of the clause he conceived was an indirect approval of our situation relative to external concerns; and to this he could not give



his assent, as he did not consider their aspect as prosperous or auspicious.

Mr. BUTLER said, that when the committee was appointed to draft an answer, he hoped they would have used such general terms as to have secured an unanimous vote. He was willing to give the chief magistrate such an answer, as respect to his station entitled him to, but not such a one as would do violence to his regard for the constitution and his duty to his constituents. He could not approve of long and detailed answers, however unexceptionable the speech might be in matter, and however respectable the character might be from whom it came. He had hoped, from the peculiar situation of the country, and of the Senate, that nothing would have been brought forward in the answer on the subject which agitated the June executive session, calculated to wound the feelings of members. He had been disappointed; it was evident, that some members of the Senate could not give their vote in favour of the address in its present shape, without involving themselves in the most palpable inconsistency.

He had long since for his own part, declared himself against every article of the treaty, because in no instance as it bottomed on reciprocity, the only honourable basis. After this declaration, how could he, or those who coincided in opinion with him, agree to the present address without involving themselves in the most palpable inconsistency.

He did not agree with the gentlemen of New-York in his exposition of the meaning of the clauses objected to. They certainly declare our situation as to our external relations to be favourable. Our situation as far as it respects Great Britain, he contended was not in the least ameliorated.—Their depredations on our commerce have not been less frequent of late than at any other period since the beginning of her war with France. Her orders for the seizure of all our vessels laden with provisions cannot surely be a subject for congratulation. When it became authenticated that our trade was relieved from these embarrassments, then he was confident members of Senate, who were with him in sentiment, would readily express their satisfaction at the auspicious prospect, opened for this country to the enjoyments of tranquility and happiness. But until that happy time should arrive, he could not give his voice to deceive the inhabitants of the United States, remote from the sources of information, to hoodwink them by sanction-

ing with his vote a statement unwarranted by truth, and presenting to them a picture of public happiness not sanctioned by fact.

The sentence objected to, notwithstanding the explanation of the gentleman from New-York, appeared to him so worded as to lead the citizens at large to believe, that the spoliation on our commerce were drawing to a fortunate close. This was not, he conceived, warranted by the existing state of things. Indeed he protested, he knew no more of the actual situation of the treaty negotiation, than the remotest farmer in the union, could he then declare, he asked, that it was drawing to a happy close. Indeed from the latest information received, far from our situation having been ameliorated by the negotiation of our executive, he conceived our trade as much in jeopardy as ever.

As to the internal prosperity, he owned there was some cause for congratulation; but even in this his conviction could not carry him as far as the clauses in the address seemed to go. In a pecuniary point of view, the country had made a visible progress; but he saw in it no basis of permanent prosperity. There were no circumstances attendant on it, that gave a fair hope that the prosperity would be permanent. The chief cause of our temporary pecuniary prosperity is the war in Europe, which occasions the high prices our produce at present commands, when that is terminated, those advantageous prices will of course fall.

Mr. BUTLER came now to speak of the second objectionable clause. He regretted whenever a question was brought forward that involved personality in the most indirect manner. He wished always to speak to subjects unconnected with men; but the wording of the clause was unfortunately such as to render allusion to official character unavoidable. He objected principally to the epithet *firm* introduced in the latter clause as applied to the supreme executive. Why *firmness*? he asked. To what? or to whom? Is it the *manly* demand of restitution made of Great Britain for her accumulated injuries, that called forth the praise; for his own part he could discern no firmness there. Is it for the *undaunted* and *energetic* countenance of the cause of France, in her struggle for freeing herself from despotic shackles? He saw no *firmness* displayed on that occasion. Where then is it to be found? Was it in the opposition of the minority of the Senate and the general voice of the people against the treaty that that *firmness* was displayed?



"If it is, that *firmness* in opposing the will of the people, which is intended to be extolled, the vote shall never," said Mr. Butler, "leave the walls of this Senate with my approbation."

He could not approve, he said, that *firmness* that prompted the executive to resist the unequivocal voice of his fellow-citizens from New-Hampshire to Georgia. He would have applauded the firmness of the President, if in compliance with the unequivocal wish of the people he had resisted the voice of the majority on the treaty, and refused his signature to the treaty.

This was, he understood (and it should be mentioned to the honour of the President) his first intention—Why he changed it, time, he said, must disclose.

He concluded by proposing an amendment to be substituted in lieu of the objectionable clauses, should they be struck out.

Mr. READ said, he was not in the habit of giving a silent vote, and as many of his constituents were averse to the instrument to which he had given his assent, he thought this a fit opportunity to say something on the subject.

Gentlemen on the other side had spoken of their feelings; did they suppose, he asked, that those who were in the majority had not feelings. Also, gentlemen declared, they would not recede from their former determinations; did they expect that the majority would recede?

He had, he said, taken the question of the treaty in all its aspects, and considered it maturely, and though he lamented that he differed in opinion on that subject with his colleague and a portion of the people of his state, he nevertheless remained convinced that the ratification of it was advisable: it rescued the country from war and its desolating horrors.

After reading that part of the President's speech to which the clauses objected to were an echo, he asked, whether any one could say, under the conviction that the measures of government had prevented a war, that a view of our foreign relations was not consolatory. On all hands, he observed, the idea of a war was deprecated, both sides of the house wished to avoid it, then is it not a consolatory reflection to all that its horrors have been averted. Is there a man, who does not believe that had the treaty not been ratified we should have had war? If the country had been plunged into a war would it be as flourishing as it is? The

trifling vexations our commerce has sustained are not to be compared to the evils of a state of hostility. What good end could have been answered by a war?—the address in the part under discussion says no more, than that we rejoice at the prospect that the blessings of peace will be preserved; and does not this expectation exist?

Great Britain in the plenitude of her power had availed herself of the right she had under the law of nations, of seizing enemies' goods in neutral vessels; but has allowed compensation to some Americans, and a system of mild measures on our part is the best security for further.

He adverted to that part of Mr. Butler's observations, which related to the probable fall of provisions at the peace. We ought not to be grieved if Europe was rid of the calamities of war at that price. But he contended, that from the measures of administration permanent advantages were secured to this country. The value of our soil has been enhanced; wealth has poured in from various parts of the globe, and many permanent advantages secured.

There had been one assertion made, which by repetition had by some almost been taken for granted, but which required proof to induce him to believe it, and that was, that a majority of the citizens of the United States are opposed to the treaty. In the part of the country he came from he owned there might be a majority of that opinion, but he believed the contrary of the United States at large; he expressed a conviction, that when his constituents came to consider the measure maturely they would change their opinions; and, indeed, understood that the false impressions by which they were at first actuated were already wearing off.

But the Senate and President are the constitutional treaty making powers. If mistaken in their decisions, they cannot be accused of having been misled by sudden and immature impressions. He should conceive himself unfit to fill a chair in Senate if he suffered himself to be carried away by such impressions. The People could not in their town meetings, deprived of proper information, possibly form an opinion that deserved weight, and it was the duty of the executive not to be shaken in their determination by tumultuous proceedings from without. Upon this ground he much approved the President's conduct and thought it entitled to the epithet *firm*.



In local questions, affecting none but the interests of his constituents, he should attend to their voice, but on great national points he did not consider himself as a representative from South Carolina, but as senator for the Union. In questions of this last kind, even if the wishes of his constituents were unequivocally made known to him, he should not conceive himself bound to sacrifice his opinions to theirs.—He viewed the President as standing in this situation, and though he might hear the opinions of the people from every part of the United States, he should not sacrifice to them his own conviction; in this line of conduct he has shewn his *firmness*, and deserves to be complimented for it by the senate.

The address reported, he said, contained nothing that would wound the feelings of any member. The senate would not, in his opinion, act improperly if they expressed opinions in coincidence with their act in June session. The feelings of the majority should be as much consulted as those of the minority. The minority are not asked to retract; but there is a propriety in the senate's going as far in their address as the speech went, though it should be stiled a vote of self-approbation. He hoped the clauses would not be struck out.

Mr. ELLSWORTH was opposed to striking out. The clause records a fact, and if struck out the senate deny it. The President asserts it, in the address reported, senate assent, a motion is made to strike out, is it because the truth of it is doubted? It cannot be called an unimportant fact, therefore its omission will not be imputed to oversight. The latter part of the clause expresses our gratitude to Almighty God. Will the senate refuse to make an acknowledgment of that kind? Do they not admit that he is the source of all good, and can they refuse to acknowledge it? And if so, is it possible that in admitting the fact and expressing the sentiment which so naturally flows from it, the senate would wound the feelings of any friend to his country?

The truth of the fact is as clear as that the sun now shines, the sentiment is unexceptionable, he therefore recommended to his friend the mover not to insist upon striking out merely but that he should vary the motion and propose a substitute.

To bring the mind to the point with precision, it was necessary to attend to the wording of the clause. He read it. As to the signification of that part which relates to our

foreign concerns, he did not consider it as hypothetical, but a positive declaration of a conviction that their situation is satisfactory, and on that ground he wished to meet the question.

The clause objected to expresses an expectation that the causes of external disagreement which have unhappily existed will be peaceably done away. He said he had that expectation; many have it not. Those who have it not will negative the clause, those who have it will vote in its favour, the result will be the sense of a majority; the senate could not be expected, more than on other occasions to be unanimous: If the declarations contained in those clauses are supported, they will be considered as the sense of the majority of senate, others may dissent; but because unanimity could not be obtained it was no reason why the majority should give a virtual negative to the declaration which they conceived founded on truth.

He examined in detail the situation of our external relations to shew the foundation on which he rested his expectation of a satisfactory arrangement of them, and of our general prosperity in that respect. With Morocco our treaties are renewed. With Algiers assurances are given by the Executive that a peace is not far distant. With Spain on the same authority it is understood, that our prospects are favourable in that quarter; with the hitherto hostile Indians, a peace is within reach, and the only quarter in which doubt can arise is from Great Britain. But even with respect to that nation his expectation was, that our differences there would terminate amicably; and he believed this to be the expectation of the senate, as a collective body.

Mr. ELLSWORTH then went into the examination of some other parts of the clauses objected to, and vindicated the propriety of the epithets *enlightened*, *firm*, *persevering*, and concluded by lamenting that there existed a difference of opinion; but hoped that this would not deter the majority from an expression of their sense.

Mr. TAZEWELL said,—The discussion had taken a turn different from that which he expected when he heard the motion. He understood the motion at the time it was made, and still so understood it, as not intending to question the propriety of any thing which was contained in the President's communication to both houses of Congress. But from what had been said, (by Mr. Read of S. C.) that part of the answer to the President's communications which had



In local questions, affecting none but the interests of his constituents, he should attend to their voice, but on great national points he did not consider himself as a representative from South Carolina, but as senator for the Union. In questions of this last kind, even if the wishes of his constituents were unequivocally made known to him, he should not conceive himself bound to sacrifice his opinions to theirs.—He viewed the President as standing in this situation, and though he might hear the opinions of the people from every part of the United States, he should not sacrifice to them his own conviction; in this line of conduct he has shewn his *firmness*, and deserves to be complimented for it by the senate.

The address reported, he said, contained nothing that would wound the feelings of any member. The senate would not, in his opinion, act improperly if they expressed opinions in coincidence with their act in June session. The feelings of the majority should be as much consulted as those of the minority. The minority are not asked to retract; but there is a propriety in the senate's going as far in their address as the speech went, though it should be stiled a vote of self-approbation. He hoped the clauses would not be struck out.

Mr. ELLSWORTH was opposed to striking out. The clause records a fact, and if struck out the senate deny it. The President asserts it, in the address reported, senate assent, a motion is made to strike out, is it because the truth of it is doubted? It cannot be called an unimportant fact, therefore its omission will not be imputed to oversight. The latter part of the clause expresses our gratitude to Almighty God. Will the senate refuse to make an acknowledgment of that kind? Do they not admit that he is the source of all good, and can they refuse to acknowledge it? And if so, is it possible that in admitting the fact and expressing the sentiment which so naturally flows from it, the senate would wound the feelings of any friend to his country?

The truth of the fact is as clear as that the sun now shines, the sentiment is unexceptionable, he therefore recommended to his friend the mover not to insist upon striking out merely but that he should vary the motion and propose a substitute.

To bring the mind to the point with precision, it was necessary to attend to the wording of the clause. He read it. As to the signification of that part which relates to our

foreign concerns, he did not consider it as hypothetical, but a positive declaration of a conviction that their situation is satisfactory, and on that ground he wished to meet the question.

The clause objected to expresses an expectation that the causes of external disagreement which have unhappily existed will be peaceably done away. He said he had that expectation; many have it not. Those who have it not will negative the clause, those who have it will vote in its favour, the result will be the sense of a majority; the senate could not be expected, more than on other occasions to be unanimous: If the declarations contained in those clauses are supported, they will be considered as the sense of the majority of senate, others may dissent; but because unanimity could not be obtained it was no reason why the majority should give a virtual negative to the declaration which they conceived founded on truth.

He examined in detail the situation of our external relations to shew the foundation on which he rested his expectation of a satisfactory arrangement of them, and of our general prosperity in that respect. With Morocco our treaties are renewed. With Algiers assurances are given by the Executive that a peace is not far distant. With Spain on the same authority it is understood, that our prospects are favourable in that quarter; with the hitherto hostile Indians, a peace is within reach, and the only quarter in which doubt can arise is from Great Britain. But even with respect to that nation his expectation was, that our differences there would terminate amicably; and he believed this to be the expectation of the senate, as a collective body.

Mr. ELLSWORTH then went into the examination of some other parts of the clauses objected to, and vindicated the propriety of the epithets *enlightened, firm, persevering*, and concluded by lamenting that there existed a difference of opinion; but hoped that this would not deter the majority from an expression of their sense.

Mr. TAZEWELL said,—The discussion had taken a turn different from that which he expected when he heard the motion. He understood the motion at the time it was made, and still so understood it, as not intending to question the propriety of any thing which was contained in the President's communication to both houses of Congress. But from what had been said, (by Mr. Read of S. C.) that part of the answer to the President's communications which had



given rise to the motion, was intended to have a further operation than he originally believed. He asked what had given rise to the practice of returning an answer of any kind to the President's communications to Congress in the form of an address. There was nothing he said, in the constitution, or in any of the fundamental rules of the Federal government which required that ceremony from either branch of the Congress. The practice was but an imitation of the ceremonies used upon like occasions in other countries, and was neither required by the constitution or authorized by the principles upon which our government was erected.—But having obtained, he did not intend now to disturb it.—To allow the utmost latitude to the principle which had begotten the practice, it could only tolerate the ceremony as a compliment to the Chief Magistrate. It could not be permitted to forestall opinions previous to regular discussions, nor to operate as a mean of pledging members to the pursuit of a particular course which subsequent and more full inquiries might shew to be extremely improper.

Every answer, therefore, to the President's communications ought to be drawn in terms extremely general, neither seducing the President into a belief that this House would pursue a general recommendation into points not at first contemplated by them, nor pledging themselves to the world that that state of things was just which time had not permitted them thoroughly to examine. The clauses now under consideration had at least in one instance deviated from this principle. They declare to the world—"That the interesting prospect of our affairs with regard to the foreign powers, between whom, and the United States controversies have subsisted, is not more satisfactory than the review of our internal situation." The communications from the President have not uttered so bold a sentiment, nor is there any thing in those communications that justifies the assertion of this fact: Placing the treaty with Great Britain out of the question, which seems to have been the uppermost consideration when this sentence was penned, the seizure of our provision vessels since the signature of that treaty and the unwarrantable imprisonment of our seamen are acts which cloud our prosperity and happiness. The minds of the Americans must be brought to consider these things as trivial incidents in our political affairs, before the sentence under consideration can be approved. He

said he must therefore vote for the motion to strike out the two clauses of the answer in order that some fit expressions might then be introduced to succeed them. He hoped the answer might be couched in terms just and delicate towards the President without wounding the feelings of any Senator; and he believed both might be done without any difficulty after the two clauses were expunged.

The motion for striking out being put, was negatived.

#### N O E S.

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| Messrs. Bingham, | Livermore,    |
| Cabot,           | Marshall,     |
| Ellsworth,       | Paine,        |
| Foster,          | Read,         |
| Frelinghuysen,   | Ross,         |
| King,            | Strong,       |
| Latimer,         | Trumbull, 14. |

#### A Y E S.

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Messrs. Bloodworth, | Martin,      |
| Brown,              | Mason,       |
| Butler,             | Robinson,    |
| Langdon,            | Tazewell, 8. |

After a further attempt to amend the address, against which the Senate divided—15 and 7—the address was agreed to—14 to 8.

#### THE ADDRESS.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

SIR,

It is with peculiar satisfaction that we are informed by your Speech to the two Houses of Congress, that the long and expensive war in which we have been engaged with the Indians north west of the Ohio, is in a situation to be finally terminated; and though we view with concern the danger of an interruption of the peace so recently confirmed with the Creeks, we indulge the hope, that the measures that you have adopted to prevent the same, if followed by those legislative provisions that justice and humanity equally demand, will succeed in laying the foundation of a lasting



peace with the Indian tribes on the Southern as well as on the Western Frontiers.

The confirmation of our treaty with Morocco, and the adjustment of a treaty of peace with Algiers, in consequence of which our captive fellow citizens shall be delivered from slavery, are events that will prove no less interesting to the public humanity, than they will be important in extending and securing the navigation and commerce of our country.

As a just and equitable conclusion of our depending negociations with Spain, will essentially advance the interest of both nations, and thereby cherish and confirm the good understanding and friendship, which we have at all times desired to maintain, it will afford us real pleasure to receive an early confirmation of our expectations on this subject.

The interesting prospect of our affairs with regard to the foreign powers, between whom and the United States controversies have subsisted, is not more satisfactory, than the review of our internal situation; if from the former we derive an expectation of the extinguishment of all the causes of external discord, that have heretofore endangered our tranquility, and on terms consistent with our national honour and safety, in the latter we discover those numerous and wide spread tokens of prosperity, which in so peculiar a manner distinguish our happy country.

Circumstances thus every way auspicious demand our gratitude and sincere acknowledgements to Almighty God, and require that we should unite our efforts in imitation of your enlightened, firm, and persevering example, to establish and preserve the peace, freedom, and prosperity of our country.

The objects which you have recommended to the notice of the Legislature, will in the course of the session receive our careful attention, and with a true zeal for the public welfare, we shall cheerfully co-operate in every measure that shall appear to us best calculated to promote the same.

JOHN ADAMS, Vice-President  
of the United States, and President of the Senate.

Dec. 12, 1795.

To which the President was pleased to make the following reply.

GENTLEMEN,

With real pleasure I receive your Address, recognizing the prosperous situation of our public affairs; and giving assurances of your careful attention to the objects demanding legislative consideration; and that with a true zeal for the public welfare, you will cheerfully co-operate in every measure which shall appear to you best calculated to promote the same.

But I derive peculiar satisfaction from your concurrence with me in the expressions of gratitude to Almighty God, which a review of the auspicious circumstances that distinguish our happy country have excited; and I trust that the sincerity of our acknowledgements will be evidenced by a union of efforts to establish and preserve its peace, freedom and prosperity.

G<sup>o</sup>. WASHINGTON.

# DEBATE ON THE MANNER OF PRESENTING THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

WEDNESDAY, 9th December, 1795.

The House of Representatives went into a committee of the whole House, on the speech of the President, Mr. Muhlenberg in the chair. The clerk then read the speech.

Mr. VANS MURRAY (*Maryland*) next moved that a committee should be appointed to draw up a respectful address in answer to the speech. The resolution was in these words.

“Resolved, That it is the opinion of this committee, that a respectful Address ought to be presented by the House of Representatives to the President of the United States, in answer to his speech to both Houses of Congress, at the commencement of this session, containing assurances, that this House will take into consideration the various and important matters recommended to their attention.

Mr. SEDGWICK (*Massachusetts*) seconded the motion.

Mr. PARKER (*Virginia*) offered an amendment, which was seconded by Mr. Macon (*N. C.*)



The substance of this amendment was to strike out all that part of the resolution which goes before the word *assurances*; in place of which Mr. Parker proposed to appoint a committee, who should personally wait on the President, and assure him of the attention of the House, &c. and concluding as above. Mr. Parker had the highest respect for the President, but he had always disapproved of this practice of making out addresses in answer to these speeches, and of the House leaving their business to go in a body to present it. Last session the framing of this address had cost very long debates, and produced very great irritation. Some of the most disagreeable things that happened, during the session, occurred in these debates. He wished unanimity, and the dispatch of business, and so could not consent that any address should be drawn up, as he preferred ending the affair at once by sending a committee with verbal answer.

MR. MURRAY replied, that the practice of drawing up such an address was coeval with the constitution. It was consistent with good sense, and he did not see that any arguments had been employed by the gentlemen who spoke last against it. It was true that the House might send a verbal answer, and it was likewise true that the President might have sent them his speech by his secretary, without coming near them at all. He had come to Congress, and Mr. Murray could perceive no impropriety in Congress returning the compliment by waiting on him.

The committee divided on the amendment proposed by Mr. Parker. Eighteen members rose in support of it, so it was lost. The committee then agreed to the resolution, as offered by Mr. Murray. They rose, and the Chairman reported progress. The resolution was agreed to by the House. The next question was of how many members the select committee should consist, that were to be employed in framing a draft of the address. The different numbers of *five* and *three* were proposed. A division took place on the former motion, when only thirty-one gentlemen rose in its favour. The motion for a committee of three members to report an address was of course carried. Mr. Madison, Mr. Sedgwick and Mr. Sitgreaves were appointed.

trifling vexations our commerce has sustained are not to be compared to the evils of a state of hostility. What good end could have been answered by a war?—the address in the part under discussion says no more, than that we rejoice at the prospect that the blessings of peace will be preserved; and does not this expectation exist?

Great Britain in the plenitude of her power had availed herself of the right she had under the law of nations, of seizing enemies' goods in neutral vessels; but has allowed compensation to some Americans, and a system of mild measures on our part is the best security for further.

He adverted to that part of Mr. Butler's observations, which related to the probable fall of provisions at the peace. We ought not to be grieved if Europe was rid of the calamities of war at that price. But he contended, that from the measures of administration permanent advantages were secured to this country. The value of our soil has been enhanced; wealth has poured in from various parts of the globe, and many permanent advantages secured.

There had been one assertion made, which by repetition had by some almost been taken for granted, but which required proof to induce him to believe it, and that was, that a majority of the citizens of the United States are opposed to the treaty. In the part of the country he came from he owned there might be a majority of that opinion, but he believed the contrary of the United States at large; he expressed a conviction, that when his constituents came to consider the measure maturely they would change their opinions; and, indeed, understood that the false impressions by which they were at first actuated were already wearing off.

But the Senate and President are the constitutional treaty making powers. If mistaken in their decisions, they cannot be accused of having been misled by sudden and immature impressions. He should conceive himself unfit to fill a chair in Senate if he suffered himself to be carried away by such impressions. The People could not in their town meetings, deprived of proper information, possibly form an opinion that deserved weight, and it was the duty of the executive not to be shaken in their determination by tumultuous proceedings from without. Upon this ground he much approved the President's conduct and thought it entitled to the epithet *firm*.



In local questions, affecting none but the interests of his constituents, he should attend to their voice, but on great national points he did not consider himself as a representative from South Carolina, but as senator for the Union. In questions of this last kind, even if the wishes of his constituents were unequivocally made known to him, he should not conceive himself bound to sacrifice his opinions to theirs.—He viewed the President as standing in this situation, and though he might hear the opinions of the people from every part of the United States, he should not sacrifice to them his own conviction; in this line of conduct he has shewn his *firmness*, and deserves to be complimented for it by the senate.

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Mr. ELLSWORTH then went into the examination of some other parts of the clauses objected to, and vindicated the propriety of the epithets *enlightened*, *firm*, *persevering*, and concluded by lamenting that there existed a difference of opinion; but hoped that this would not deter the majority from an expression of their sense.

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The motion for striking out being put, was negatived.

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| Cabot,           | Marshall,     |
| Ellsworth,       | Paine,        |
| Foster,          | Read,         |
| Frelinghuysen,   | Ross,         |
| King,            | Strong,       |
| Latimer,         | Trumbull, 14. |

#### A Y E S.

|                     |              |
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| Messrs. Bloodworth, | Martin,      |
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After a further attempt to amend the address, against which the Senate divided—15 and 7—the address was agreed to—14 to 8.

#### THE ADDRESS.

##### TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

SIR,

It is with peculiar satisfaction that we are informed by your Speech to the two Houses of Congress, that the long and expensive war in which we have been engaged with the Indians north west of the Ohio, is in a situation to be finally terminated; and though we view with concern the danger of an interruption of the peace so recently confirmed with the Creeks, we indulge the hope, that the measures that you have adopted to prevent the same, if followed by those legislative provisions that justice and humanity equally demand, will succeed in laying the foundation of a lasting



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As a just and equitable conclusion of our depending negotiations with Spain, will essentially advance the interest of both nations, and thereby cherish and confirm the good understanding and friendship, which we have at all times desired to maintain, it will afford us real pleasure to receive an early confirmation of our expectations on this subject.

The interesting prospect of our affairs with regard to the foreign powers, between whom and the United States controversies have subsisted, is not more satisfactory, than the review of our internal situation; if from the former we derive an expectation of the extinguishment of all the causes of external discord, that have heretofore endangered our tranquility, and on terms consistent with our national honour and safety, in the latter we discover those numerous and wide spread tokens of prosperity, which in so peculiar a manner distinguish our happy country:

Circumstances thus every way auspicious demand our gratitude and sincere acknowledgements to Almighty God, and require that we should unite our efforts in imitation of your enlightened, firm, and persevering example, to establish and preserve the peace, freedom, and prosperity of our country.

The objects which you have recommended to the notice of the Legislature, will in the course of the session receive your careful attention, and with a true zeal for the public welfare, we shall cheerfully co-operate in every measure that shall appear to us best calculated to promote the same.

JOHN ADAMS, Vice-President  
of the United States, and President of the Senate.

Dec: 12, 1795.

*To which the President was pleased to make the following reply.*

GENTLEMEN,

WITH real pleasure I receive your Address, recognizing the prosperous situation of our public affairs; and giving assurances of your careful attention to the objects demanding legislative consideration; and that with a true zeal for the public welfare, you will cheerfully co-operate in every measure which shall appear to you best calculated to promote the same.

But I derive peculiar satisfaction from your concurrence with me in the expressions of gratitude to Almighty God, which a review of the auspicious circumstances that distinguish our happy country have excited; and I trust that the sincerity of our acknowledgements will be evidenced by a union of efforts to establish and preserve its peace, freedom and prosperity.

G<sup>o</sup>. WASHINGTON.

#### DEBATE ON THE MANNER OF PRESENTING THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

WEDNESDAY, 9th December, 1795.

THE House of Representatives went into a committee of the whole House, on the speech of the President, Mr. Muhlenberg in the chair. The clerk then read the speech.

MR. VANS MURRAY (*Maryland*) next moved that a committee should be appointed to draw up a respectful address in answer to the speech. The resolution was in these words.

“Resolved, That it is the opinion of this committee, that a respectful Address ought to be presented by the House of Representatives to the President of the United States, in answer to his speech to both Houses of Congress, at the commencement of this session, containing assurances, that this House will take into consideration the various and important matters recommended to their attention.

Mr. SEDGWICK (*Massachusetts*) seconded the motion.

Mr. PARKER (*Virginia*) offered an amendment, which was seconded by Mr. Macon (N. C.)



The substance of this amendment was to strike out all that part of the resolution which goes before the word *assurances*; in place of which Mr. Parker proposed to appoint a committee, who should personally wait on the President, and assure him of the attention of the House, &c. and concluding as above. Mr. Parker had the highest respect for the President, but he had always disapproved of this practice of making out addresses in answer to these speeches, and of the House leaving their business to go in a body to present it. Last session the framing of this address had cost very long debates, and produced very great irritation. Some of the most disagreeable things that happened, during the session, occurred in these debates. He wished unanimity, and the dispatch of business, and so could not consent that any address should be drawn up, as he preferred ending the affair at once by sending a committee with verbal answer.

MR. MURRAY replied, that the practice of drawing up such an address was coeval with the constitution. It was consistent with good sense, and he did not see that any arguments had been employed by the gentlemen who spoke last against it. It was true that the House might send a verbal answer, and it was likewise true that the President might have sent them his speech by his secretary, without coming near them at all. He had come to Congress, and Mr. Murray could perceive no impropriety in Congress returning the compliment by waiting on him.

The committee divided on the amendment proposed by Mr. Parker. Eighteen members rose in support of it, so it was lost. The committee then agreed to the resolution, as offered by Mr. Murray. They rose, and the Chairman reported progress. The resolution was agreed to by the House. The next question was of how many members the select committee should consist, that were to be employed in framing a draft of the address. The different numbers of *five* and *three* were proposed. A division took place on the former motion, when only thirty-one gentlemen rose in its favour. The motion for a committee of three members to report an address was of course carried. Mr. Madison, Mr. Sedgwick and Mr. Sitgreaves were appointed.

REMARKS—HERE was a direct attempt, on the part of *Mr. Parker*, to set aside a respectful custom, which was coeval with the operation of the Constitution of the United States. One would imagine that this instrument was grown out of favour with the member from Virginia; but we shall be less surpris'd at this, when we come, by and by, to see the instructions of his state to its Senators in Congress.

#### DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE SPEECH.

TOESDAY, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1795.

The house went into a committee on the report of the select committee of an address in answer to the President's speech.

The following paragraph gave rise to some discussion.

"Contemplating that *probably unequalled* spectacle of national happiness, which our country exhibits, to the interesting summary which you, Sir, have been pleased to make, in justice to our own feelings, permit us to add the benefits which are derived from your presiding in our councils *resulting as well from the UNDIMINISHED confidence of your fellow citizens, as from your zealous and successful labours in their service.*"

MR. PARKER (*Virginia*) moved to strike out the words *probably unequalled*, which was carried, 43 against 39.

He then moved to strike out from the word *resulting* to the end of the paragraph.

MR. MURRAY, (who, as the chairman was about to put the question on Mr. Parker's motion) said that he could not in justice to the opinions of his constituents, &c. of the state of Maryland at large, give a silent vote. He would state to the committee a recent fact that warranted him in declaring that the President possessed in the amplest manner, the confidence of the citizens of Maryland. The Legislature of that state probably foreseeing the efforts of certain persons to diminish the confidence of the public in the chief magistrate, had passed a resolution which appears to have been unanimous, by which they declare to the world, the most perfect confidence in the President.



This fact though known certainly to many, might not be known to all present; and as in this solemn testimony of approbation and confidence, he totally co-incided he could neither be entirely silent when a question like this implies the contrary sentiment, nor withhold from gentlemen a great fact so recently displaying the undiminished confidence of the state of Maryland.

MR. GILES (*Virginia*) hoped that the latter amendment would not take any disagreeable turn. He was not prepared to go, at length, into the propositions. He did not think it inconsistent with all due respect for the President to shorten this clause.

A member proposed to restrict this amendment to merely striking out the word *undiminished*.

MR. HARPER (*S. Carolina*) thought the President as wise as honest and faithful a public servant as possibly could be. He was not prepared to say that the President was as popular as he formerly has been, but there is no doubt of his being reinstated in the confidence of the public. Mr. Harper was confident that four fifths of us still trust in him. But Mr. Harper thought that objections might be made to the clause as it now stands, and he designed, when the present question had been discussed to move an amendment.

MR. PARKER informed the house that, with much respect for the President, his confidence had *diminished*. He agreed to limit his amendment to striking out the word *undiminished*, in the clause above quoted.

MR. SEDGWICK (*Massachusetts*) observed, that it had now, in consequence of the motion for striking out the word *undiminished*, become a question of fact, whether our own and our constituents confidence in the President was or was not diminished? To suppose the former, in his opinion, was unsupported by facts, was disgraceful to our constituents, and must in the end prove baneful to that system of government which we were attempting to administer.

That so far as he was acquainted with the actual disposition of the people, of that part of the country, where alone he could have obtained competent knowledge, he was as certain as he could be, of any public sentiments, that confidence in the President, so far from having been diminished by the artifices which had been made, on the con-

rary had been increased ; and he felt perfectly sure, that at no antecedent period, had the tide of popular affection, set so strongly towards him as at the present moment.

This part of the address expressed our own and our constituents undiminished confidence in the President ; and an acknowledgment of his zealous and successful labours in the public service. That he had approved of this part of the address, as a member of the select committee, and on reviewing, since, the subject, he had found no cause to reject the opinion which he had then formed. He did believe, and he loved to believe, because it was honourable to his constituents, that the late efforts, which had been made, had, instead of diminishing, increased the public confidence. That a late measure of the Executive had indeed provided a fit occasion for a disclosure of enmities which prudence and policy had heretofore concealed, *but* had not shaken the well founded reliance of the public on the wisdom and integrity of the President. To suppose an abatement of confidence, in his opinion, was to suppose in the people a want of a due sense of gratitude, for the distinguished blessings which they enjoyed ; it was to suppose a baseness of disposition unworthy of their former conduct, unworthy of freemen. " Who," he asked, " of a candid mind, and fair and honourable sentiments, can take a review of the glorious conduct of our chief during the conflict of the revolution ; his zealous and successful labours for the public good ; his bravery, moderation and humanity : who can follow him to the place of his happy retirement, and there again behold him, covered with glory, attended by the gratitude and affection of his fellow citizens, and the applauses of the world ; who can see him again, issuing at the call of his countrymen, from this retirement, and putting at hazard for their benefit, the mighty mass of reputation which he had collected, that best reward of virtuous minds ; who can review the situation of this country for the six years of his administration, the dangers to which we have been exposed, and the happy escapes we have experienced, effected by his prudence, sagacity, and firmness ; who can review the conduct of the president in those interesting scenes, but with a heart filled with gratitude, affection and confidence ?"

No man, he hoped, in his heart ; no man, he believed, would, consistent with a due regard to his own reputation, deny to the President his just claims of merit. No man



could without disgracing his constituents, deny their participation in this sentiment. It only remained, then, to be enquired whether these just feelings of their, and our hearts, ought under the existing circumstances, to be published to the world. He held this declaration to be, at this moment, an indispensable obligation, due from the representatives of the people, from a regard to themselves, their constituents, and the permanent and beneficial existence of the government which they had chosen.

Although the President had twice been called, by the unanimous and unsolicited voice of his countrymen, to preside in their government; though to comply with their wishes, he had sacrificed more than any other man could have done, and although the only reward he sought or would accept, was their approbation; yet licentious and turbulent presses, had teemed with scandalous and infamous abuse. What sentiments by these causes might be produced in his mind, whether pity, contempt or indignation, or a mixture of them all, he could not determine, nor was it necessary to enquire further to determine whether we should attempt to defeat their effects. In no manner could this be done, so effectually, as by declaring our own and our constituents confidence in him.

The President had told the Legislature, that it was the favourable wish of his heart, to unite with us, in our efforts to preserve, prolong, and improve our immense advantages. Did we believe this declaration? why then should we not unite in counteracting, the malignant efforts of sedition, by publishing the sentiment, at once just to him and honourable to ourselves?

The efforts which had been made to depreciate the character of that first of men and of patriots; instead of producing the nefarious intention, he believed in his conscience, had increased as it ought, the public confidence and regard. Thus feeling and believing, he wished to rescue our country from the imputation of baseness and ingratitude, which otherwise it would appear to merit.

But it was said that an expression of confidence, at this time, might be construed into a declaration of approbation of a late measure of the Executive, and preclude the right of examining that measure according to its merit, whenever it should be laid before the Legislature. To this he answered, that, for himself he had no such intention, and he believed it incapable of such a construction. Confi-

dence did not imply an approbation of every part of the officer's conduct, to whom it belonged, it did not exclude the idea of fallibility; but it only implied an approbation of the general tenor of his conduct.

If when the first officer of our government was thus attacked, he was left to be overwhelmed by a torrent of abuse, without the countenance and support of his constituents, or their representatives; what man, he asked, who had talents to be useful, reputation to lose, or feelings to be wounded, would put all at hazard to serve an ungrateful country? What would such mean and base desertion produce, but to make the first offices of our government, posts to which merit would be uncongenial—what! but to provide vacancies to be filled by harpies who would prey on the vitals of the Republic?

There was another circumstance which pressed itself on his reflections on this occasion. It was the character—the just character which the President possesses throughout the civilized world. What would it be, to reject this part of the address, but to justify those, he hoped, unfounded aspersions, which had been made on Republican governments? What! but to verify those malign predictions which had been pointed at our own system?

Thus had he exposed to the committee, as concisely as he could, his own views of this important subject. He would only add, that when the President entered first on the execution of the important duties of his office, the man who would have dared to predict, that the present question would at this time, have become a subject of debate, would have been considered as predicting the infamy of his country.

Mr. LIVINGSTON said that there were many whose confidence was impaired by a late transaction. He could not therefore consent to the expression in the draft of the address. Mr. Sedgwick had said that consenting to strike out the word *undiminished*, would be telling the world that our confidence actually is diminished; and the member from Massachusetts adds, that the House are thus brought into a distressing dilemma. If there is a distress in the case, it originates with this member himself, as one of the committee who brought in this draft of an address. He moved, to prevent any unconciliating debates, that the address might be recommitted. The motion was seconded by Mr.



Sedgwick. The committee rose, and the resolution for recommitting past.

It was then moved that two members should be added to the committee on draughting the address. Mr. Tracy considered the present number as sufficient. Mr. Freeman and Mr. Baldwin were added.

WEDNESDAY, 16th December 1795.

THE select committee reported the following address to the President, in answer to his Speech to both Houses of Congress, which was unanimously agreed to :

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

S I R,

As the Representatives of the people of the United States, we cannot but participate in the strongest sensibility to every blessing which they enjoy, and cheerfully join with you, in profound gratitude to the author of all good, for the numerous and extraordinary blessings which he has conferred on our favoured country.

A final and formal termination of the distressing war, which has ravaged our North Western Frontier, will be an event, which must afford a satisfaction proportioned to the anxiety with which it has long been sought ; and in the adjustment of the terms, we perceive the true policy of making them satisfactory to the Indians, as well as to the United States, as the best basis of a durable tranquility. The disposition of such of the southern tribes, as had also heretofore annoyed our frontier, is another prospect in our situation so important to the interest and happiness of the United States, that it is much to be lamented, that any clouds should be thrown over it, more especially, by excesses on the part of our own citizens.

While our population is advancing with a celerity which exceeds the most sanguine calculations—while every part of the United States displays indications of rapid and various improvement—while we are in the enjoyment of protection and security, by mild and wholesome laws, administered by governments founded on the genuine principles of rational liberty, a secure foundation will be laid for accelerating, maturing and establishing the prosperity of our country, if, by treaty and amicable negotiation, all those causes of external discord, which heretofore menaced our tranquility,

shall be extinguished, on terms compatible with our national rights and honor, and with our constitution, and great commercial interests.

Among the various circumstances in our internal situation, none can be viewed, with more satisfaction and exultation, than that the late scene of disorder and insurrection, has been completely restored, to the enjoyment of order and repose. Such a triumph of reason and of law, is worthy of the free government, under which it happened, and was justly to be hoped, from the enlightened and patriotic spirit, which pervades and actuates the people of the United States.

In contemplating that spectacle of national happiness, which our country exhibits, and of which, you, Sir, have been pleased to make an interesting summary, permit us to acknowledge and declare the very great share, which your zealous and faithful services have contributed to it, and to express the affectionate attachment, which we feel for your character.

The several interesting subjects, which you recommend to our consideration, will receive every degree of attention, which is due to them : And whilst we feel the obligation of temperance and mutual indulgence, in all our discussions, we trust and pray, that the result to the happiness and welfare of our country may correspond with the pure affection we bear to it.

THURSDAY, 17th December 1795.

THE Speaker, attended by the House, waited on the President with the address, to which they received the following reply.

GENTLEMEN,

COMING, as you do, from all parts of the United States, I receive great satisfaction from the concurrence of your testimony in the justness of the interesting summary of our national happiness, which, as the result of my enquiries, I presented to your view. The sentiments we have mutually expressed, of profound gratitude to the source of those numerous blessings, the AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD, are pledges of our obligations to unite our sincere and zealous endeavors, as the instruments of Divine Providence, to preserve and perpetuate them.



Accept, Gentlemen, my thanks for your declaration, that to my agency you ascribe the enjoyment of a great share of these benefits. So far as my services contribute to the happiness of my country, the acknowledgment thereof, by my fellow citizens, and their affectionate attachment, will ever prove an abundant reward.

REMARKS—THUS ended this part of the proceedings, in a manner, which, perhaps, reflects but little honour on the House of Representatives.

The sentiment contained in the proposed address, expressing an *undiminished* confidence in the President, seemed to me the most proper that any combination of words could convey; and particularly on the present occasion. The measures of the chief Magistrate had been most violently opposed; he had been all but menaced, in order to deter him from the exercise of powers vested in him by the constitution; his motives had been disfigured, and his character reviled. This was to be expected from the leaders of a faction, averse to his administration and even to the government, and from those among the people whom they had been able to mislead. But, were the declarations of these turbulent demagogues; were the licentious aspersions and abominable falsehoods of *Valerius*, and the rest of that *hired* tribe, to be seconded by the legislators of the union? On this address the malcontents had fixed their eyes: from it they expected encouragement or reproof. To be silent was to encourage. The Representatives knew that the feelings of the President had been deeply wounded, and it was their place to administer the healing balm. To effect this, and at once to silence the hydra of faction, nothing was so well calculated as a firm and explicit declaration, that their confidence was *undiminished*.

However, had not the word *undiminished* been introduced into the proposed address, the omission of that epithet would have been of less consequence;

but, when once proposed, to expunge it by a vote of the House, was to declare to the whole union, and even to the whole world, that the President had *lost the confidence of his fellow citizens*; a declaration that in some countries precedes a dismissal from office, downfall, and disgrace!

Mr. PARKER, who made the motion for striking out the word *undiminished*, tells us plainly, that, "with much *respect* for the President, his *confidence* was *diminished*;" and thus, in this short sentence, advances the most palpable inconsistency that ever fell from the lips of mortal man. His confidence diminishes, while his respect remains undiminished! Unless, indeed, we are to imagine that his respect was in a consumption as well as his confidence. Such a paradoxical avowal might shine in the lunatic reveries of a Rousseau; but is little congenial with the sobriety of legislative debate.

These observations are far from being inapplicable to the address finally agreed on by the house. On the 16th of December, they "acknowledge" and declare, that the *zealous and faithful services* of the President have had a very great share in "contributing to the happiness of the country;" and express the *affectionate attachment*, they feel for "his character," when, but the very day before, they had determined that their confidence in him was diminished! If they were persuaded, that his zeal and faithful services had so eminently contributed to the happiness of the country, what reason had they to declare that their confidence was diminished? And, if their confidence was diminished, how could his character deserve their affectionate attachment? There is no medium here: confidence in a public man, is like virtue in a woman; as long as it exists at all, it must be unimpaired. It is intire, or it is no more.



It was easy to perceive why this medley of *respect* and *want of confidence* was introduced into the debate. Twenty years of military and civil services, attended with a success unexampled in the annals of the world, and backed with a life of piety and spotless virtue, were not to be annihilated at a blow. This citadel of reputation could not be carried by assault. The more prudent, because, perhaps, the more sure way, was to attack it by a hidden and circuitous route.

There is no telling with what success this may be attended ; but certain it is, that it will not be the fault of Mr. Parker, and those who sided with him on this occasion, if General Washington, or any other man who has a reputation to lose, should again be seen at the head of the government. The three branches should be checks on each other, it is true ; but, if they are not also mutual supports, the whole fabrick will soon crumble to the ground ; and the degree of popular strength, whatever that may be, acquired by the Representative branch through the present decision, must inevitably tend to enfeeble the other two.

#### DEBATE ON THE ATTEMPT AT CORRUPTION BY RANDALL AND WHITNEY.

MONDAY, December 28th, 1795.

Mr. SMITH (S. C.) requested the attention of the House, for a moment, to a subject of a very delicate nature. He understood that a memorial was, this morning, to be presented from some individuals, applying for a grant of a large tract of Western Territory, and as the House had referred all such applicants to the committee for bringing in the land office bill, of which he was Chairman ; and as it was probable that the memorial about to be presented would be disposed of in the same manner, he conceived it a duty incumbent on him to disclose to the House,

at this time, some circumstances which had come to his knowledge. Mr. Smith then said, that on Tuesday evening last, a person of the name of Randall, called on him, requesting an hour of confidential conversation: In the interview which took place, Randall made a communication to the following effect. He intended to present a memorial on the Monday following to Congress, for a grant of all the western lands, lying between lakes Michigan, Erie, and Huron, to the amount of about twenty millions of acres. He, and his associates, some of whom were Canada merchants, who had great influence over the Indians, proposed to form a company and to undertake the extinction of the Indian title, provided Congress would cede to them the fee simple of the land. The property would be divided into forty shares, twenty-four of which should be reserved for such members of Congress as might *favour* the scheme, and might be inclined to come into it, after the adjournment of Congress, on the same terms as the original associators. Randall himself had the disposal of twelve shares, for members from the southern states, and colleagues of his, a like number for those of the eastern states. A certain number of shares were to be the property of those Canada merchants, who had an unbounded influence over the Indians occupying those lands, and who would, if this plan succeeded, pacify those Indians, who were the most hostile to the United States: that General Wayne's treaty was a mere delusion, and that without the co-operation of those influential persons, the United States would never have peace in that quarter. Mr. Smith said, that he had communicated this overture the next morning to Mr. Murray, one of the members from Maryland, requesting his advice how to proceed on so delicate an occasion; that Mr. Murray recommended a disclosure to Mr. Henry of the Senate, and that, on a consultation with those gentlemen, it was resolved that it was Mr. Smith's duty to make an immediate communication of the matter to the President, which was accordingly done.

Mr. MURRAY rose next. He had received an application of the same nature, but having already heard of the proposal, "I was," said Mr. Murray, "in a state of preparation, and my virtue had not such a shock to encounter, as that of the gentleman last up."

Mr. MURRAY corroborated what Mr. Smith had said as to the communication of this affair to himself. He added, he ad-



vised Mr. Smith to give Randall another meeting for the purpose of developing his scheme and expectations more fully.

Mr. MURRAY said that Mr. Smith informed him on Wednesday morning; next day in the morning, he informed Mr. Henry of the Senate. Mr. Smith, on that day, informed the President. On that day (Thursday) Mr. Randall was introduced to him, and asked an interview at his lodging; he gave him an appointment at five in the afternoon. Mr. Henry and he were together when Randall came in. Randall talked about the policy of extinguishing the Indian title to the Peninsula, formed by lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan, containing about eighteen or twenty millions of acres of very good land; and talked in terms that he might have employed from a pulpit. He did not make any corrupt overtures, till Mr. Murray had carried him into his own apartment. There Randall opened his proposals, as had been before mentioned by Mr. Smith, observing, that if Congress would sell this land to him and his company, they intended to divide it into forty or forty-one shares. Twenty-four shares were to be appropriated to such members of Congress, as chose to support the memorial, which would be presented on Monday. The members were to have their shares on the same terms on which his company should obtain the land. The company would give five hundred thousand, or perhaps a million of dollars; but on Mr. Murray's apparent acquiescence in his views, he said that the shares would be given to the members who advocated the measure, if they pleased to accept them, after they returned to their homes. Mr. Murray started a difficulty about the embarrassment of land speculations, for which he, personally, had no genius; and then Randall instantly turned out the cat, and told him, that if *he* did not choose the share of land, he should have cash in hand for his share. Mr. Smith and Mr. Murray had resolved to disclose this to the House, lest some innocent member might offer a memorial, and become liable to suspicion. Randall had hinted that larger proportions would be assigned to the more active members, and lesser ones for the *small fish*.

The Speaker then rose, and expressed a wish that some gentleman would move for an order to apprehend Randall. Upon this Mr. Smith again rose, and said that a warrant to this effect had yesterday been issued by the President, and to support which, Mr. Smith had made oath before

a magistrate to the particulars above mentioned. He hoped that by this time the person was taken.

Mr. GILES rose next, and observed that an application from the same Mr. Randall had been made to himself. Besides a repetition of some particulars already stated, he told Mr. Giles that he had already secured thirty or forty members of this House, but he wanted to secure three or other members, if Mr. Giles recollected right. He added, that he had already secured a majority in the Senate. When this proposal was first made, which he thought was about ten days ago, a member from New-York (Mr. Livingston) was present. Randall had even gone so far as to say, that a written agreement was drawn out, and subscribed by a number of eastern members, and he wished Mr. Giles to extend another obligation of the same kind for the southern members, the purport of which paper was understood to be, that the members who voted in support of the disposal of the lands, were to be secured in a stipulated share of them, without having their names mentioned in the deed. Mr. Giles was solicitous to learn the names of the members who had *already* entered into the negotiation, but Randall assured him, that, from motives of delicacy, he durst not communicate any of the names. Mr. Giles then desired a sight of the agreement, that he might be able to comprehend its meaning, before he should attempt to draw any similar paper. The man called a second time, and, as Mr. Giles conceived, about four days ago, but never could produce either the deed or any draft of it. Mr. Giles had already communicated the proposal to several members, and, in particular, to the Speaker.

The Speaker (Mr. Dayton) mentioned, that Mr. Giles had, some time ago, informed him of the proposal. He replied, that if an opportunity offered, *he would take care to select a committee consisting of members sure to detect the guilty, if any such could exist*; adding, that he expected the House to believe that he would not have used such words, but on so extraordinary an occasion.

Mr. CHRISTIE said that he was the person who introduced Randall to Mr. Smith and Mr. Murray. He had long known him as a respectable man. He had mentioned to Mr. Christie, in general, that it was a landed speculation; and hinted that he, Mr. Christie, might accept of a share. In reply, that gentleman assured him, that he could not



possibly have a concern in any such transaction. Randall had not, to Mr. Christie, insinuated that any undue advantages would accrue to members supporting the intended purchase.

Mr. Buck, a member from Vermont, mentioned, that a person of the name of Whitney, who appears to have been an associate with Randall, had called upon him in the country, with a proposal of this kind.

REMARKS.—I never was more surprised in my life, than when I heard Mr. Dayton, the Speaker, avow, that he had told Mr. Giles, he would *take care to select such a committee* as should detect the guilty, if any such could exist.

This sentence from the Speaker discovers to us, that he had but an indifferent opinion of the integrity of some of the members of the House: for, had not this been the case, he would not have fallen on a plan of *detecting* the guilty. The *qualifying phrase*, “if any such could exist,” does by no means do away the existence of suspicion in his mind; for, if no suspicion existed, why should he talk of *taking care to select a committee* for the purpose of detection. This last expression has also something of a party nature in it. Mr. Dayton should have presumed that *every member* in the House would be anxious to detect guilt: to say that he would take care *to select* such a committee as would do this, was not only to presume, that there were some members who would *not do it*, but it was to hint, at the same time, that he knew, or, at least, guessed, *who those members were*. This conclusion is inevitable; for, it would have been an absurdity, which so sensible a man as the Speaker could not have fallen into, to propose to himself the selecting of such a committee as would be *sure* to detect the guilty, if he had had an equal confidence in all the members of the House, or if he had not had some particular members in his eye, whom he

looked upon as men of more integrity than some others.

I know not how the House felt on this occasion; but, had I been a member, I freely declare, that I should have felt my honour much more deeply wounded by this suggestion of the Speaker, than by any thing that could possibly have been advanced, or even proved, by the land-jobbers themselves. If he had incautiously let fall such expressions to Mr. Giles, there was certainly no kind of necessity for repeating them in public, unless called upon to that effect. This is by no means the least exceptionable circumstance, as, the unasked-for repetition of the suggestion, seems to have been merely a lure for popularity; a trick always beneath an independent member of Congress, and more especially so, when that popularity is to be obtained at the expence of his colleagues.

TUESDAY, *Dec. 29th.*

Mr. BLOUNT brought forward a resolution in nearly the following words: "Resolved, that it be made a charge against Robert Randall, that he declared to a member of this House, that a number, consisting of not less than thirty members of this House had engaged to support his memorial."

Mr. MURRAY called upon gentlemen, by their sensibility to personal dignity, and the character of the House, to arrest the motion. Its tendency certainly was to place the honour of the House, or a very great part of it, in the power of a man of whose known profligacy of principles there could now be no doubt. Will you, he observed, permit, nay invite him, whom you arraign at the bar of this House, to be a *public accuser*! Will you adopt a charge against him, which is in its nature an imputation that however lightly and wickedly made, will implicate perhaps innocent men. These men to rescue their own reputations will be obliged to risque their characters, on the weight of their veracity, by denying this man's charge in the face of a world but too prone to suspect—By this motion Randall's assertion to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. Giles) the



only member who has mentioned it, is to be alledged against Randall as an offence. That Randall said to the gentleman, that there were thirty or forty members *secured* he had no doubt—but he believed the fact to be that Randall was both deceived himself and attempted to deceive the gentleman—"Why," said Mr. Murray, "the fellow told me that there were thirty members secured."—Mr. Murray had not thought proper to state that circumstance, because he did not so much consider it as a fact material to the detection of Randall's guilt, as it was one which if mentioned might possibly afford to malice an opportunity of affixing a stigma to any thirty or forty names at which personal enmity might point—no public good could result from such a disclosure—for the assertion of such a man as Randall could not among men of honour be deemed a sufficient ground of suspicion; and yet the malice of the world, or the rancour of personal enemies might attach suspicion and dishonour to almost the whole House, from the indefiniteness of the charge. When Randall informed him, on Thursday night, that there were thirty members, who would support his measures, he had felt in the very conduct which he was then himself pursuing to detect Randall, to arrest his scheme, a principle of candour towards others, which taught him that other gentlemen to whom Randall had communicated his scheme *confidentially*, were probably determined as honestly as himself to crush the infamous plot against the honour of the House. He knew that he who would be wicked enough to attempt seduction, might be weak enough to use this intelligence artfully, for the purpose of leading him the more readily to accept terms of infamy; because the object was painted as easily attainable; and that Randall might wish to diminish all qualms, by exhibiting a pretended group of accomplices whose company would at least diminish the appearance of singularity.—I entertained, said Mr. Murray, no suspicion of any man—I knew Randall to be a corrupt man from his offers to myself—I therefore placed all his intelligence to the score of flimsy art—I knew that such a man was not to be fully believed, where his interest was to magnify his success—I drew favourable auspices with respect to the corps to which I belong, from another piece of intelligence of his, which was, that he communicated to some members, one of whom he had named, and whom I knew to be a man of honour, in what he called the *general* way.—This general

way was a display of the sounder part of his scheme merely, and not the corrupt—consisting in developing the advantages which would result to the Union in the disposal of their lands, provided the harmony of the Indians could be secured.—In this view of his plan he gave the subject an attitude far from unimposing;—and I conceived that as in proportion to the numbers engaged confidentially he must know that the hazard of detection increased, he would not communicate the corrupt view as long as he found the more honest part of the policy might appear to strike any gentleman as a measure useful to his country.—I therefore *did not believe* Randall, in the sense he evidently intended. Therefore, Sir, I did not feel myself at liberty to mention the assertion which I conceived to be unavailing as a circumstance necessary to the example I wished to make, but which if communicated I thought might cast a stain, by the mystery that enveloped it, upon a body whose character ought to be held sacred to the confidence of the country. My duty was to bring Randall's attempt to corrupt unequivocally into light, not by repeating all the arts which he excited to corrupt; nor by exhibiting them in a way that might wound the feelings of men of honour, who, if charged even personally by Randall, would have no refuge from odium but in their characters and counter-assertion—this though always conclusive with those who personally know them, is not a protection to minds of sensibility against the stings of calumny. The voice of fame is not composed from the voice of men of honour.

It was he said in the spirit of such reflections, that he and the gentleman with whom he had concerted the mode and time of disclosure [Mr. W. Smith] had determined to trust rather to the as yet unstained honour of the House, than to the loose declarations of Randall; and therefore had resolved on Friday morning to make the disclosure, before that some gentlemen, innocent of the corrupt scheme, and acquainted with the sounder part of the plan only, might have cause to blush at having presented a memorial which it would be their duty to defeat and cover with infamy. If this charge is exhibited against Randall he will confess or deny it; if he confesses it, and in the disposition that often accompanies detected guilt, should name particular gentlemen, though their counter-assertion, would completely, in his own mind, outweigh the charge of a



corrupt and profligate accuser like Randall, yet would every man of delicacy have cause to regret, that merely for the purpose of adding to the charges against a man proved to be wicked, a stain had glanced from him upon a name innocent and honourable. Let gentlemen act with magnanimity upon this occasion—Let them resist a motion, which, however purely conceived, may eventually wound honest fame, without detecting guilt.—Mr. Murray solemnly believed, that Randall's assertion was either false totally, or true only as it respected those who had listened to him, for the purpose of making an example—or those to whom he had spoken in what he had called the *general* way. If Randall denied this charge, it would rest on the assertion of the gentleman from Virginia, but could not affect members farther, than as the measure of enquiry seemed to imply suspicion. He and the gentleman from South Carolina had both acted upon the presumption of innocence in members, and they had resolved on the timely disclosure yesterday, lest even one member, however innocent, might be placed in a painful situation by presenting the memorial. If Randall is charged with this as an offence, he verily believed the House betrayed its own honour to the malice of the world—he would therefore vote decidedly against it.

Mr. Murray, in the course of his speech, added several other observations. He did not doubt that in every district on the continent, thirty *favourites* would be pointed out, whom the people in that quarter, or at least some among them, would be disposed to consign to infamy, and perhaps there was not one district in the Union, where the same thirty members would be named. It would be said, "Sir, they are not named, but *I know who are the men.*" So rapid were the communications of the press, so keen the appetite for scandal, that when once the story was circulated, it might be impossible ever to get rid of it.

Mr. GILES replied. He was in favour of the motion of Mr. Blount. He said it was evident from the way in which this whole communication had been brought forward, that there had been no previous correspondence between Mr. Murray and himself. They had felt differently. Mr. Giles had informed the Speaker of the House. Mr. Murray and his friend [Mr. W. Smith] had communicated the affair to the President, a measure of which, as it struck Mr. Giles, he did not distinctly perceive the propriety. Mr. Giles had

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considered it as best to wait in silence, till the petition of Randall should come forward. Mr. Murray had suggested a variety of delicate motives for breaking the matter to the House, lest the petition should come forward, and hurt the feelings of an innocent and unsuspecting member. Mr. Giles did not wish to diminish the credit fully due to the gentleman in this respect. He himself had felt somewhat differently. He had acted differently.

Mr. HILLHOUSE was convinced that there was not a gentleman in the house, whose character rested on so slender a foundation, as to be affected by any thing this man could say. He felt no anxiety for the reputation of the House, for he knew that it was not in the smallest danger. The resolution went merely to make Randall confess, that he had said so and so. It implied nothing tending to affect members. A man covered with infamy making such charges could not expect credit, or obtain it from any body. Mr. Hillhouse was, for these reasons, in favour of the resolution for interrogating Randall.

The resolution passed in the affirmative.

REMARKS—In the deliberations of this day there is nothing that seems to demand a particular remark, except it be the different manner of proceedings of Messrs. Giles and Murray. Both these gentlemen had had the very same overtures made to them; but the former had informed the speaker of the House, and “considered it as best to wait in silence, till the petition of Randall should come forward;” while Mr. Murray, on the contrary, had given information to the President of the United States, and had “broke the matter to the house, lest the petition should come forward, and hurt the feelings of an innocent and unsuspecting member.”

I do not pretend to determine what were the motives of Mr. Giles: God forbid I should imagine them any other than those of the purest patriotism. But, I must confess, that the manner of his proceeding might, if adopted, become a very evil precedent. Suppose, for instance, some determined party-man,



some fiery demagogue, whose only food is pop-  
 applause, and whose only object is to trouble or o-  
 verturn: Suppose a patriot of this stamp, should, at  
 some future period, wish to crush, at all events, the  
 moderate and upright part of the House? What  
 would be the method he would take, if an oppor-  
 tunity like the present offered itself? — He would  
 listen to the land-jobbers, give them no positive re-  
 fusal or discouragement, and would endeavour to  
 get from them the names of the members said to be  
 already gained. Then he would communicate the  
 matter to the Speaker, if he knew him to be of the  
 same party with himself. This done, they would  
 wait in silence, keeping the affair a profound secret  
 from all the members, except those of their own  
 faction. The trap thus set, the hunters would lie  
 close, and the instant some innocent unsuspecting  
 man (perhaps pointed out by themselves) fell into  
 it, they would rush in upon him with all the ready-  
 sharpened weapons of misconstruction, calumny and  
 reproach; and, when they had effected his destruc-  
 tion, that of his friends, and of the government it-  
 self, they would shout out, *glorious sport!*

It is possible, too, that such an unprincipled fac-  
 tion might themselves already lie under the im-  
 putation of having been corrupted; and, in that case,  
 a stroke of retaliation like this would be particular-  
 ly agreeable. Men are but too prone to seek for  
 companions in disgrace. Revenge is sweet, at what-  
 ever price it be purchased. A faction already sunk  
 to the bottommost pit of infamy, would feel a kind  
 of consolation in dragging down their colleagues,  
 and even their country after them.

Mr. MURRAY's manner of proceeding was exact-  
 ly the opposite of all this. He laid no baits, set no  
 springs. He did not break the matter to one mem-  
 ber or one party, but to the whole house; and, if  
 he shewed less desire to "*detect the guilty,*" than  
 Messrs. Giles and Dayton, he showed a much great-

er desire to put innocence on its guard, and preserve the honor of the House unblemished.

WEDNESDAY, 30th December 1795.

RANDALL and WHITNEY being in custody, a debate took place with respect to allowing them counsel at the bar of the House, which was also determined in the affirmative. On this occasion *Mr. Christie* observed, that he had known Randall for many years, and had never heard of any thing against him before. He had lately been at Detroit, and *Mr. Christie* believed that he had been injured by keeping bad company.—He was not the first man in the country who had been corrupted by British influence and British company. He moved that Randall should be allowed untill tomorrow at twelve o'clock. This was negatived.

REMARKS—It appeared to me particularly cruel to negative this motion of *Mr. Christie's* seeing that poor Randall, whom *Mr. Christie* had known for so many years, had been injured by keeping bad company. But, as to British influence, I could not for my life perceive, with what propriety it was brought in here. It seemed rather a wanton attack on the character of a nation, whose influence in the line of corruption has not been made apparent in this country; and, I may add, it was a wanton attack on the people of this country too, to say that Randall "was not the first man in it who had been corrupted by British influence." *Mr. Christie* seems, indeed, to have fallen into the cant of the opposers of the treaty; for, we know, that they attributed its conclusion and ratification to the influence of British Gold. We have seen the firm, candid and upright man, who negotiated that treaty, and the Senators who advised its ratification, burnt in an effigy, representing them as receiving the gold of Great-Britain; we have been long scandalized at these scenes, and at the atrocious falshood of the opinion they



were intended to propagate ; one would have hoped therefore, that no member of Congress, would have sanctioned, in any manner, however indirect, proceedings from which every well informed and honest man turns with indignation.

The pleadings of the counsel, on the part of the prisoners, which took place on the 31st of Decem. are by far too long to find a place here. It is hardly necessary to observe, that they contended for the innocence of the prisoners ; nor, when the reader is informed that the defence was committed to Messrs. *Tilghman* and *Lewis*, is it necessary to say, that it was ably conducted.

As to the innocence of the land-jobbers, it would be wrong to say any thing positive about it, after the decision of the House ; but, it was not to be wondered at if *men of that profession* should imagine it possible to bribe the members of Congress, after what they had heard of other people in the government. After having heard of the “ precious confessions ” and “ overtures ” of Mr. Randolph, on behalf of himself and others, one would not have been surprized if they had attempted to bribe the President himself. They found however, other sort of men to deal with. The affair terminated to the honour of the members, and I hope I may say, to the universal satisfaction of their constituents.

#### ON THE RECEPTION OF THE FRENCH FLAG.

TUESDAY, *January 5th*, 1796.

I WAS rather late in my attendance this day, a circumstance the more distressing, as I found, not only the gallery, but even the passage also, full of spectators. I, at last, made shift to reach my post ;

but not without an infinite deal of difficulty; for, the citizens I had to deal with, being in general brim full of the doctrine of equality, pay but very little respect to old age.

Every person within the walls of the house, seemed to be waiting for the developement of some great and important mystery. The members were paired off, laying their heads together, whispering and listening with great eagerness; while the Speaker, seated with his chin supported between his right finger and thumb, and his eyes rivetted to the floor, appeared lost, buried alive, as it were, in profundity of thought. Never did wisdom appear more lovely in my eyes. "Two such statues," said I to myself, "would have become the shrine of *Minerva* much better than the blinking twilight mousters, that her votaries formerly placed on it."

This seriousness of the members of the House naturally produced the most anxious expectation in the minds of the good citizens in my quarter. A thousand ridiculous inquiries were made in the twinkling of an eye, which were answered by a thousand still more ridiculous conjectures. One said that a law was going to be read to oblige the Virginians to free their slaves and pay their just debts; but another swore that was impossible. A third declared a second embargo was to be laid, and a fourth observed, that it was to hinder the cruel English from carrying off our poor horses, to eat them in the West Indies. In short, were I to repeat all that I heard, I should never have done; for, of two hundred of us, no two individuals were of the same opinion. One thing, however, we all agreed in: an impatience that I should in vain endeavour to describe, but of which the half-successful lover, who has waited for an answer to a supplicating billet-doux, may have some faint idea.



To tell the reader the truth of my opinion, I was afraid that some new confiscating or sequestrating project was on foot; and when Mr. Dayton, the Speaker, awoke from his rêverie, and began to speak, "Lord have mercy," said I, "upon the poor British creditors." My fears on this account were soon dissipated, for he informed the House, that, as he understood, a message from the President was about to be delivered, and I knew that the President was much too honest and honourable a man to think of any such thing. The Speaker told us that this message was of the most "*solemn*" and "*serious*" nature, and he therefore requested both the members of the House and the strangers in the gallery to observe the profoundest silence.

The reader will easily imagine, that a warning like this increased the torture of suspense. It was now that we felt the value of the hearing faculty. I observed my neighbours brushing aside their matted and untutored locks, that nothing might impede the entrance of the glad tidings. We were, as the poet says, "all eye, all ear." But there was a little man down below whose anxiety seemed to surpass that of all the rest. He crept to within a very few paces of the leeward side of the chair, and, turning himself sidewise, lifted up the left corner of his wig, placing the auricular orifice, open and extended, in a direct line with the Speaker's mouth, so that not a single breath of the precious sounds could possibly escape him. His longing countenance seemed to say, in the language of his countryman Macbeth: "Speak! speak! had I three ears, by heaven I'd hear thee."

The attitude of this subaltern quid nunc had like to have shaken the inflexibility of my muscles; I made a shift, however, to mould them up into a gravity adapted to the awfulness of the scene that was pre-

paring for my view.—All at once, as if by the power of magic, the doors flew open, “grating on their hinges harsh thunder,” and the President’s Secretary was introduced with an American officer bearing a Flag, which I took to be a representation of the day of judgment. It had a *thunder-bolt* in the centre, with a *cock* perched upon it; the emblems of Almighty vengeance and of watchfulness. At two of the corners the *globe* was represented in a flame. The staff was covered with black velvet, sad colour of death, and crowned with a Parisian pike, fatal instrument, on which the bleeding and ghastly heads, nay, even the palpitating hearts of men, women and children have so often been presented to the view of the polite and humane inhabitants of that capital.

Curiosity now gave way to another passion, that of fear. For my part, I am not ashamed to confess, that I never was in such trepidation since I first saw the light of day. Nor were my companions in a more enviable state. I looked round and beheld the affrighted group huddled up together, like a brood of chickens waiting the mortal grip of the voracious kite. In this general picture of consternation one object attracted particular notice. It was a democrat, who was so fully persuaded that the Flag was the harbinger of fate, that he began to anticipate the torments of the world to come. Never did I before behold such dreadful symptoms of a guilty conscience. He was as white as paper, his knees knocked together, his teeth chattered, he wrung his hands and rolled his eyes, but durst not lift them towards heaven. His voice was like the yell of the inhabitants of the infernal regions. “Oh! Valerius! cursed Pittachus! Franklin Bache! Franklin Bache! Oh! that infernal atheistical C—lendar!”—This was all we could get from him;



but this was enough to assure me, that he was one of those unhappy wretches, who had been led astray by the profligate correspondents of Mr. Bache, and by the atheistical decadery calendar, which that gentleman has, with so much unholy zeal, endeavoured to introduce amongst us, in place of the Christian one, we, as yet, make use of.

My attention was called off from this terrific picture of despair by a voice from beneath. A tall spare man, dressed all in black from head to foot, who seemed to be "*A Calm Observer*," was beginning, in a hollow voice, to read (as I expected) the decrees of fate, but, to my agreeable surprise, I found it was a decree of the National Convention. — It was in the following words:

To the Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

*Citizens Representatives,*

The connections which nature, reciprocal events, and a happy concurrence of circumstances, have formed between two free nations, cannot but be indissoluble. You have strengthened those sacred ties by the Declarations, which the Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States has made, in your name, to the National Convention, and to the French People. They have been received with rapture by a nation, who know how to appreciate every testimony which the United States have given to them of their affection. The colours of both nations, united in a center of the National Convention, will be an everlasting evidence of the part which the United States have taken in the success of the French Republic.

You were the first Defenders of the Rights of Man, in another hemisphere. — Strengthened by your example, and endowed with an invincible energy, the French people have vanquished that tyranny, which, during so many centuries of ignorance, superstition and baseness, had enchained a generous nation.

Soon did the people of the United States perceive that every victory of ours, strengthened their independence and happiness. They were deeply affected at our momentary misfortunes, occasioned by treasors purchased by English gold. They have celebrated with rapture the successes of our brave armies.

None of these sympathetic emotions have escaped the sensibility of the French nation. They have all served to cement the most intimate and solid union that has ever existed between two nations.

The Citizen Adet who will reside near your Government in quality of Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, is specially instructed to tighten those bands of fraternity and mutual benevolence. We hope that we may fulfil this principal object of his mission, by a conduct worthy of the confidence of both nations, and of the reputation which his patriotism and virtues have acquired him.

An analogy of political principles, the natural relations of commerce and industry;—the efforts and immense sacrifices of both nations in defence of liberty and equality;—the blood which they have spilled together;—their avowed hatred for despots;—the moderation of their political views;—the disinterestedness of their councils;—and especially the success of the vows which they have made in presence of the Supreme Being, to be free or die,—all combine to render indestructable the connections which they have formed.

Doubt it not, Citizens; we shall finally destroy the combination of Tyrants; you, by the picture of prosperity, which in your vast countries, has succeeded to a bloody struggle of eight years;—we, by the enthusiasm which glows in the breast of every Frenchman. Astonished nations, too long the dupes of perfidious Kings, Nobles and Priests, will eventually recover their rights, and the human race, will owe to the American and French nations, their regeneration and lasting peace.

PARIS, 30th Vendemaire, 3d year of the French Republic, one and indivisible.

The Members of the Committee of Public Safety.

J. S. B. DELMAS,

MERLIN (of Douai) &c.



"This *Merlin*," says Doctor Moore, in his journal, "is not thought to be quite so great a conjurer as his namesake of old." The opinion here related by the Doctor, seems to be pretty well confirmed by the dispatch before us ; and I think we may add, that the rest of the committee of Public Safety, who participated in drawing it up, were no greater conjurers than their colleague.

Passing by the general stile of this Anglo-Gallican epistle, let us examine a passage or two of its contents.

"The connections which *nature, reciprocal events* and a happy concurrence of circumstances, have formed between two free nations, cannot but be indissoluble."

By this we are to understand, that, in our *nature* and in the *events of our revolution*, we resemble the French. In the first place, what has nature given us in common with them? Are we descended from the same race? Is the resemblance to be found in our persons, in our language, or in our dispositions? Did ever any body hear an American (except he was a frenchified Democrat) running on with an eternal bombastical babble about nothing? Do we sing, dance, and cut throats, all in the same instant? Place one of our plain, sober, sensible young men by the side of a profligate prig of the revolution, and see if you can find any two animals of God's creation between which there is so little likeness. What, then, has nature done *to draw us together*, as they call it? It appears to me, that she has acted in a sense directly opposite. Like a tender and solicitous mother, seeing her favourite children forming connections contrary to her laws, she has exerted all her efforts to *draw* them from their ruin. May we listen to her voice! and not suffer ourselves to be sucked into the rattle-making embraces of those anarchists, whom she says: "a void, as you would avoid my curse!"

As the nature of a people is a thing entirely independent of their own agency, I see no great reason that we have to be offended at the Convention, for aspiring to resemble us in natural dispositions and affection; but, with respect to *the events of our two revolutions*, the work of our own hands, to tell us that we are connected by a similarity here, is what we may, and ought to be offended at, and highly too. In what historian, I beseech them, did they find out that the events of our revolution resembled the events of theirs? Did we begin our revolution by robbery and murder? Was our declaration of independence, like their declaration of rights, promulgated midst the cries of the dying? Or did the heralds stand to read it under the dripping head of some innocent victim? Was our Congress ever divided into impious factions, striving to out-vie each other in cruelty and blasphemy? Did they decree the word of God to be a lie, and write over our burial places: "this is the place of *eternal sleep*?" Did we ever see the guillotine permanent in our market-places; children bound beneath it, while the blood of their parents flowed on the scaffold; our gutters running with the streams of life? Did we cut off the heads of our fathers and mothers, drag our children to death? and did these Representatives of the French people ever hear, that our Congress applauded such hellish acts? Did they ever hear, that we roasted people alive, and cut off their flesh to eat; that we stripped poor innocent defenceless women, and shot them by hundreds, with infants in their arms? Did they ever hear of men, born in America, or in any other country except France, savage enough to tear out the heart of a human being and bite it with their teeth; rip open women with child, and stick the quivering embryo on the point of their bayonets? Is there any American base enough to say that we were guilty of these things? And if we never were, in the name of all that's im-



udent, how durst they thus insult us by comparing the events of our revolution to those of their own?—Never, till I heard this dispatch read, did I wish for a seat among the Legislators of the Union. Had I been on that floor, this hectoring epistle should never have gone into the world, without being accompanied with a proof, that one American at least, felt as he ought to do, the indignity offered to the character of his nation.\*

But let us proceed to another passage.—“Soon did the people of the United States perceive that every victory of ours, strengthened their independence and happiness. They were deeply affected at our momentary misfortunes, occasioned by treasuries purchased by English gold. They have celebrated with rapture the successes of our brave armies.”

Now, let me ask who are those people of the United States, that “soon perceived” that what Master Merlin pleases to call victories *strengthened* their *independence* and *happiness*? For my part, I was so far from perceiving this *soon*, that I have never perceived it at all; no, nor even imagined either. It would be but a poor pitiful independence, I am afraid, were it dependent on their victories. Their victories, if we ought to call victories what has been purchased by the ruin of an empire, have been in a

\* Lest the reader should imagine, that the horrid deeds, glanced at in this paragraph, are advanced at random, I take this opportunity of informing him, that a work, which I have had long in hand, and which will very soon be published, will not only convince him, that I have never exaggerated the cruelties of the French revolutionists; but that I have kept far within the bounds of truth. In this work the affrighted reader will see clear convincing *proofs*, of such consummate villainy, such refinement in barbarity, as never before entered into the heart of the most savage butcher of the human species.

quarter where we have neither territory nor commercial connections. What is their overrunning the Low Countries to us? What safety can we possibly derive from their successes in Savoy, or their late victory on the Rhine? Had they sallied out, indeed, and destroyed the great *Leviathan*, and established for ever the liberty of the seas, as they faithfully promised us they would, I should have listened to them; but, alas! the sea-monster still rolls about, sweeping them from the face of the waters, when ever he meets with them. This is fine strengthening of our independence.

Besides, there is something in the very idea of an independence that stands in need of the strength of another nation, which, to me, appears ridiculous. Independence ought to imply, a capacity to *stand alone*. If, then, we have this capacity, what need have we of French aid? And, if we have it not, we do wrong to talk about independence at all; for, a *dependent independence* is the most unenviable state into which a poor helpless nation ever fell. — It is easy to discover why they are continually plying us with this old thread-bare tale; but it is not so easy to discover how it happens, that so many among us are still their dupes.

We now come to the “English Gold.” They tell us, that the people of this country “were deeply affected at their momentary misfortunes, occasioned by treasons purchased by English Gold.” — This is an excellent way of accounting for misfortunes. When the French gain a victory, it is by their valour, but when they are beaten, it is by the gold of their enemies. There is one circumstance here, which, it would seem, our dear friend Merlin overlooked; and that is; where there are treasons there must be traitors, and where there is corruption there must be receivers as well as givers. This being the case, it naturally follows, that this



English gold has been received by corrupt French traitors. Whether this does them honour or not, or whether it be a circumstance that ought to excite our confidence in their nation, I leave the reader to determine.

But, how does this apply to ourselves? What have we to do with their money matters? Ah! perhaps the reader does not see why this English gold was glided into the flag epistle. It was not without a motive, I can assure him. The writers knew that their epistle would be published in this country, and they looked upon it as a fine opportunity to hint at English corruption, when the treaty was about to arrive among us.\* They knew also, that they had made abundant use of gold themselves, and we have ever seen that it is the practice of the world, to cry out on others, while the sin lies at their own door.

We have heard much talk about English gold, or, as it is commonly called the "gold of Pitt;" but I would venture my life, that there is not a single person in the United States, who believes that it has been employed among us. A proof, an infallible proof, that it has not, we hear it exclaimed against. Gold has a different effect: it ever makes converts: it opens the mouth of the boisterous demagogue against every body else but the donor. Had Mr. Pitt known "the pretended patriots of America," as well as Citizen Fauchet did; had he known that their consciences were going off dog-cheap, he might have employed a few thousand guineas to good purpose. He might have bought up all the *Democratic Societies* in the country at the reasonable rate of twenty pounds *per club*. These remarks may possibly reach Billy Pitt; if they

\* This epistle was written in October 1794, and consequently, they expected it would arrive here before Mr. Jay.

should, I hereby engage, if he will send me a bank bill of ten thousand pounds, to turn the hearts of all this horde of patriots in the course of one month from the date of my receipt. I will not only silence their execrations against him, but will turn their cerberean howlings into songs of praise. Instead of the bloody *Ca Ira* and the brutal *Carmagnole*, I will make them bawl out, "Britannia rule the waves;" nay, even "God save Great George our King." And all this I undertake to do for the reasonable commission of twenty five *per cent*. The reader may, perhaps, look upon this as presumption in me; but, when he recollects that I have to do with Democratic Societies; when he recollects that Citizen Fauchet could have "determined" on *civil war* or on *peace* with the aid of only "a few thousands of dollars," he will be ready to allow, that I could perform what I here promise with ten thousand good pounds sterling.

In the next sentence of the passage above quoted, Merlin tells us, that the people of America "celebrated with rapture the successes of the brave French armies."—Aye, aye, and of the brave French fleets too. I wish Master Merlin had spoken as little truth here as he has done in the rest of his epistle. For my part I have ever been ashamed of these celebrations of the French successes: they appeared to me to be indications of a spirit of partiality, very unbecoming in a people who were continually putting in their claims to the rights and privileges of *neutrality*. But, let us do justice here. Who were these civic-feasters? "The people of America," says Merlin; but Merlin is a little mistaken here. They were composed of the drunken rabble of some great towns, headed by those who were very probably in the pay of the Convention. I am aware that I shall be told here, that the cannons of the



State of Pennsylvania were fired at these feasts, that the G . . . . . assisted in person, and that *honourable* mention is made of him, in the *procès-verbal* (or minutes of the proceedings) sent to the French government; but this will not make me retract what I have said about *drunken rabble*, nor about those who were very probably *in the pay* of the Convention; on the contrary, I produce this circumstance as a proof of these my assertions.

I shall take particular notice of but one passage more of this loving legislative epistle.—“ An analogy of political principles, the natural relations of commerce and industry; the efforts and immense sacrifices of both nations, in the defence of liberty and equality;—the blood which they have spilled together;—their avowed hatred for despots;—the moderation of their political views; the disinterestedness of their councils; and especially the success of the vows which they have made in the presence of the Supreme Being, to be free, or die,—all combine to render indestructable the connections which they have formed.”

And do they tell us, that our vows to the Supreme Being resemble theirs? And have they the assurance to talk to us about the Supreme Being, after the publication of their decrees! Do we not know, that one of this very Convention who writes to us thus, mounted the tribune of the Assembly, and called on them to “ throw down the altars of God?” And, do we not know, that the Convention, in consequence of this impious motion, decreed, that the French people acknowledged no other god, or rather goddess, but *Reason*? They not only instituted and celebrated a festival to this new-fangled deity, but a *strumpet* was accoutered in the habiliments of *Reason*, seated on a throne of turf, surrounded with the insignia of what she was said to represent, and in this guise received the adorations of the

Convention, as well as of the people of Paris. Can we have forgotten these things? Can we have forgotten the decree that orders all religious books to be burnt, and can we have forgotten that this was really done? Who were the men, then, that did all this? The very Convention, that now talks to us about the Supreme Being.—But, we are told, that they have now abjured their errors; that they have now decreed, *that there is a God.*—Decreed that there is a God! What blasphemy! As if it were as easy to overturn the throne of Heaven, as that of their own country! Is there any Christian, is there any man, that can hear language like this without shuddering?—Are these our principles?—No: we imitate them in nothing. And I hope in God we never shall.

I must now insert the letter of the French Minister and that of the President, which were communicated to the House immediately after the dispatch I have just been remarking on. But, first of all, it will be necessary to give the letter of the President, by which the business was opened to the Congress.

*Gentlemen of the Senate, and of  
the House of Representatives,*

A letter from the Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, received on the 22d of last month, covered an address dated the 21st of October 1794, from the Committee of Public Safety, to the Representatives of the United States in Congress; and also informed me that he was instructed by the Committee to present to the United States the colours of France. I therefore proposed to receive them last Friday, the first day of the new year, a day of general joy and congratulation. On that day the Minister of the French Republic delivered the colours, with an address, to which I returned an answer. By the latter the House will see that I have informed the minister, that the colours will be deposited with the archives of the United States. But it seemed to me proper previously to exhibit



to the two Houses of Congress these evidences of the continued friendship of the French Republic, together with the sentiments expressed by me on the occasion in behalf of the United States. They are herewith communicated.

G<sup>o</sup>: WASHINGTON.

### FRENCH MINISTER'S LETTER.

MR. PRESIDENT,

I come to acquit myself of a duty very dear to my heart ; —I come to deposit in your hands and in the midst of a people justly renowned for their courage and their love of liberty, the symbol of the triumphs and of the enfranchisement of my nation.

When she broke her chains ;—when she proclaimed the imprescriptible rights of man ;—when, in a terrible war, she sealed with her blood the covenant she had made with Liberty,—her own happiness was not alone the object of her glorious efforts ;—her views extended also to all free people. She saw their interests blended with her own, and doubly rejoiced in her victories, which in assuring to her the enjoyment of her rights, became to them new *guarantees of their independence.*

These sentiments, which animated the French nation, from the dawn of their revolution, have acquired new strength since the foundation of the Republic. France, at that time, by the form of its government, assimilated to, or rather identified with, free people, saw in them only friends and brothers. Long accustomed to regard the American people as her most faithful allies, she has sought to draw closer the ties already formed in the fields of America, under the auspices of victory, over the ruins of tyranny.

The National Convention, the organ of the will of the French nation, have more than once expressed their sentiments to the American people ;—but above all, these burst forth on that august day, when the Minister of the United States presented to the National Representation, the colours of his country. Desiring never to lose recollections as dear to Frenchmen as they must be to Americans, the Convention ordered that these colours should be placed in the hall of their sittings. They had experienced sensations too agreeable not to cause them to be partaken of by

their allies, and decreed that to them the National colours should be presented.

Mr. President, I do not doubt their expectations will be fulfilled; and I am convinced that every citizen will receive, with a pleasing emotion, this flag, elsewhere the terror of the enemies of liberty, here the certain pledge of faithful friendship; especially when they recollect that it guides to combat, men who have shared their toils, and who were prepared for liberty by aiding them to acquire their own.

(Signed) P. A. ADET.

### PRESIDENT'S ANSWER.

Born, Sir, in a land of liberty; having early learned its value; having engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it; having in a word devoted the best years of my life to secure its permanent establishment in my own country; my anxious recollections, my sympathetic feelings, and my best wishes are irresistibly excited, whenever in any country I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom. But above all, the events of the French Revolution have produced the deepest solicitude, as well as the highest admiration. To call your nation brave, were to pronounce but common praise. Wonderful people! Ages to come will read with astonishment the history of your brilliant exploits! I rejoice that the period of your toils and of your immense sacrifices is approaching. I rejoice that the interesting revolutionary movements of so many years have issued in the formation of a constitution designed to give permanency to the great object for which you have contended. I rejoice that liberty, which you have so long embraced with enthusiasm,—liberty, of which you have been the invincible defenders, now finds an asylum in the bosom of a regularly organized government;—a government, which, being formed to secure the happiness of the French people, corresponds with the ardent wishes of my heart, while it gratifies the pride of every citizen of the United States, by its resemblance to their own. On these glorious events, accept, Sir, my sincere congratulations.

In delivering to you these sentiments, I express not my own feelings only, but those of my fellow-citizens, in relation to the commencement, the progress, and the issue of the French Revolution: and they will cordially join with me in



purest wishes to the Supreme Being, that the citizens of our sister republic, our magnanimous allies, may soon enjoy in peace, that liberty, which they have purchased at so great a price, and all the happiness which liberty can bestow.

I receive, Sir, with lively sensibility, the symbol of the triumphs and of the enfranchisement of your nation, the colours of France, which you have now presented the United States. The transaction will be announced to Congress; and the colours will be deposited with those archives of the United States, which are at once the evidences and the memorials of their freedom and independence. May these be perpetual! and may the friendship of the two Republics be commensurate with their existence.

G<sup>o</sup>. WASHINGTON.

THERE is nothing in this letter of the French Minister, which seems to call for a remark, after what I have said on the letter of the Committee of Public Safety, except it be the closing sentence; where he tells us, that the Flag guides to combat men who have shared *our toils*, and who were prepared for liberty by *aiding us to acquire our own*.

The first thing I shall take notice of here, is, their aiding us to *acquire liberty*. If this be true, we knew not what liberty was before their arrival. We were, then, *slaves* to the king of Great Britain. Take care, Mr. Adet; you have touched on a tender string here! What! Sir, were we slaves? And are we yet the *sons of slaves*? If you find me one single American (of British descent) who will allow, that he is the *son of a slave*, I'll give you leave to guillotine me to-morrow morning, fresh and fasting.

The President begins his answer by rejecting this degrading idea. "*Born, Sir, in a land of liberty.*" As if he had said: No, no, Sir, I am no *freed man*; I was never a slave; I was *born free*.—"Born, Sir, in a land of liberty; having *early* learned its va-

hue; having engaged in a perilous conflict to *de-*  
*"send it;"* and not to *acquire it*. This is the lan-  
 guage of every American that has too much res-  
 pect for himself and his ancestors, to allow that he  
 is no better than a freed negro. To talk of *aiding*  
*us to acquire our liberty*, what is it but to put us on  
 a footing with those deluded wretches, whom Vic-  
 tor Hughes is now *aiding to acquire their liberty* at St.  
 Vincent's and Granada?

And with respect to the *aid* that we received  
 from France; there are but very few of us now-a-  
 days who are not well convinced, that that *aid* was  
 afforded from motives, that call for no mighty de-  
 gree of gratitude; and even if we could ever have  
 had a doubt of this, the express declarations of the  
 Convention would have removed it. But, suppos-  
 ing the aid to have been given from motives of pure  
 love to us, and regard to our welfare; who gave  
 it? Not the National Convention. It was a king,  
 whom that Convention has put to death.—The Mi-  
 nister tells us, that the Flag "*guides to combat,*  
*"men who have shared our toils."* What! did  
 the armies of the Convention ever share our toils?  
 I fancy we shall find, that few of the men who  
 shared our toils have escaped the fatal ax. Those  
 that did, are pining away their days in a dismal  
 dungeon, or are fled into some foreign land; nay,  
 some of the men who shared our toils, are now  
 sharing the toils of the British, instead of the French  
 armies.

Any hint of this kind might, then, have been  
 spared at the presenting of the thunder-bolt Flag;  
 but, it seems, we are never to hear the last of this  
 assistance received from France. Not a letter, not  
 a communication, be it ever so short or so trifling;  
 do we ever receive without being reminded of it.  
 It is a maxim, that, when once an obligation is  
 mentioned by the obliging party, the obligation



ceases. How often, then, has our obligation ceased? "Time was," says Macbeth, "when the breath was out, men ceased to exist; but now they rise from their graves with twenty mortal murders on their heads, and push us from our stools." So it is with our obligation to the French; in vain do we pay, in vain do we discharge it, in vain do they forfeit all demand on us; still, like the grisly ghost of Bancquo, does it rise and stare us in the face. I hope our children, at any rate, will have the courage to say: "Shake not thy gory locks at us; thou canst not say 'twas we."

I do not know how my neighbours may think on this subject; but, for me, I cannot bear the idea of this everlasting debt of gratitude. It lies like a mountain on my breast. Is it redeemable? if it be, for the love of heaven, let us pay it off, and have done with it. If I can find but ten men to join me, I'll petition Congress to lay a poll tax of an eagle an head for that purpose; that we may be able, once before we die, to say we are out of debt.

But, it is time to come to the manner in which the House of Representatives received the Flag, this pledge of the friendship of the Convention.

Mr. GILES informed the House, that having been aware, that the flag would be presented to the House this day, considering it as an additional testimony of the affection of France, and it having been the practice on analogous occasions for the House to express their sentiments independent of the other branch, he had prepared a resolution expressive of what he conceived would be their sense on the occasion. It was nearly in the words following.

*Resolved*, That the President of the United States be requested to make known to the Representatives of the French People, that the House has received with the most lively sensations the communication of the Committee of the Public Safety, on the 21st of October 1794, accompanied with the colours of the French Republic, and to assure them that the presentation of the colours of France

to the Congress of the United States is deemed a most honourable testimony of the existing sympathy and affections of the two republics, founded upon their solid and reciprocal interests, that the House rejoices in the opportunity of congratulating the French Republic on the brilliant and glorious achievements accomplished under it, during the present afflictive war, and that they hope those achievements will be attended with a perfect attainment of their object, the permanent establishment of the liberty and happiness of that great and magnanimous people."

Mr. SEDGWICK wished that a thousand copies of the communications might be printed, and the farther consideration of the message deferred till to-morrow.

Mr. HARPER and Mr. W. Smith, also recommended a delay. In the sentiments of the resolution, they both agreed. Perhaps the wording might be somewhat altered.

Mr. SWANWICK was against postponing the consideration of the message, and observed that the Convention, on receiving a similar present from this country, had proceeded instantly to a vote respecting it.

Mr. W. SMITH recommended to alter the wording of the resolution, by inserting *the executive of France*, instead of *the representatives of the French people*, to whom the message in reply was to be directed.

Mr. SHERBOURNE observed, that the difference of opinion respecting the branch of government to which the answer of the House should be addressed, furnished an additional reason for a postponement. He highly respected the author of the motion, and believed his own feelings on the present occasion as fervent as those of any member. And though the feelings of the House might not be as ardent on the morrow as at this moment, yet he presumed that the sentiment would be the same. He conceived that it would be more satisfactory to the Republic, and more consistent with the dignity of the House, that their answer should be the result of cool deliberation, than a sudden impulse of enthusiasm, which the present occasion was calculated to inspire. He would therefore move that the farther consideration of the resolution on the table, be postponed till to-morrow.

Mr. SWANWICK thought a postponement in this case, as in many others, would only be a waste of time. The mo-



tion was negatived. Mr. W. Smith's amendment was then taken up, and, after some conversation, was also negatived.

Mr. PARKER moved an amendment as follows: "That this House has received with the most *sincere and lively* sensibility," &c. The amendment was for inserting the two words in Italicks, to which the House consented. The message was then voted unanimously; and a thousand copies of the communications and resolutions were ordered to be printed. A committee of two members was appointed to wait on the President, and inform him of the resolution agreed to by the House.

OH, fy! Mr. Sedgwick! how could you propose to put off the consideration of this charming subject till the next day? A delay of a whole twenty-four hours! Upon my word, Sir, such a proposition indicated but little regard for our Sister Republic. How different the conduct of Mr. Giles! He comes to the House with a *resolution* in his pocket, ready prepared, even before the communication is received. Happy member! He has thus got the start of you all in the affections of our very dear allies. Mr. Parker made, indeed, a push to come in with him, by adding the word *sincere*; but we all know, that the first step is every thing in like cases.—*Sincere and lively* are not, 'tis true, the properest epithets that could be placed before the word *sensibility*; but it would be mere pedantry to subject to rules of propriety, a resolution dictated by that "sudden impulse of *enthusiasm*, which "the present occasion was calculated to inspire."

Mr. SWANWICK (don't smile reader) saw, at once, the impropriety of postponing the consideration; because—because what!—because "the Convention, on receiving a similar *present* from *this country*, had proceeded instantly to a vote respecting it."—And who told you, my dear little orator, that "the Convention had received a simi-

“*Is present from this country?*”—Who is *this country*? What is it? I am well informed that neither the government nor the legislature knew any thing at all about the matter, till an account of it appeared in the news-papers; and you are not to learn, I presume, that whatever an Ambassador does of his own head, is in no wise binding on his country. But, suppose even, that the American flag delivered to the Convention, had been a present from this country, their manner of receiving it could have but little weight here, with men who were not devoted to their interests rather than to those of America. How long, I pray, have their measures become precedents here? “They proceeded to a vote instantly.” And when did they do otherwise? When did they hesitate? When they decreed that each department should *build a ship of the line*, there was no hesitation, any more than when they decreed that there should be *no more beggars* in France, and *no more kings* in Europe. Besides, if you are to imitate the Convention, I’ll assure you, you must make a very considerable change in the House of Representatives. You must have half a dozen negroes and mulattoes amongst you; and it would have been necessary, the day before the reception of this pretty present, for your Speaker to receive and embrace an old negro woman at the head of her many-coloured progeny. Even the ceremony itself must have undergone a change; for the American flag was carried to the Convention by an *American*; consequently the French flag should have been brought in by a *Frenchman*; and, if the imitation was to be perfect in all its parts, your Speaker should have descended from his seat, and given this bearer the fraternal hug. How vain, then, was it to talk about imitations. Before you aspire to this sublime perfection in patriotism, you and your



party must raise us to the height of the French people; a change more easy to attempt than accomplish, whatever you may please to think of it.

As I have already taken up so much of the reader's time with this flag, I shall not, at present, enter into an inquiry whether it was proper, or not, to make the President of the United States a sort of go-between to the Congress and the Convention; nor shall I ask how the American Ambassador at Paris came to think of involving his government in such an affair; I shall only observe, that, as I believe it is the first instance of legislative assemblies sending presents to each other, so, I hope, it will be the last.

END OF THE FIRST NUMBER.

